Al-Mīzān

An Exegesis of the Qur'an

ʿAllāmah al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī

Translated by: ʿAllāmah Sayyid Saʿīd Akhtār Rizvī

Edited by: Tawheed Institute Australia

Volume 12
Second Edition (2023)

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English translation
Second Edition 1446/2023

Translated from the original Arabic titled: *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾan*,
Beirut, 1393/1973 (3rd ed.)

Published by Tawheed Institute Australia Ltd.
Sydney, Australia
www.tawheed.com.au

In the Name of Allah,
the Beneficent, the Merciful.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds;
the Beneficent, the Merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgment;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we beseech
for help;
Guide us in the straight path;
The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed
favors, not of those against whom Thou art
wrathful, nor of those who are astray.

O' Allah! send Your blessings to the head of
Your messengers and the last of
Your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send Your blessings to all Your
prophets and envoys.

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Arabic Transliteration Key

Arabic Letters	Transliteration	Arabic Letters	Transliteration
ا	ā	ع	ʿ
ب	b	غ	gh
ت	t	ف	f
ث	th	ق	q
ج	j	ك	k
ح	ḥ	ل	l
خ	kh	م	m
د	d	ن	n
ذ	dh	ه	h
ر	r	و	w/ū
ز	z	ى	y/ī
س	s	ء	ʾ
ش	sh	ة	ah
ص	ṣ	ـَ	a
ض	ḍ	ـِ	i
ط	ṭ	ـُ	u
ظ	ẓ		

Publisher's Note

In an effort to make the text more accessible to English-speaking readers, the editors have chosen to use English names for the prophets and figures (as listed below but not limited to) and to use Anglicized terms that now appear in English dictionaries.

Ādam	Adam	Mūsá	Moses
Dāwūd	David	Sulaymān	Solomon
Hārūn	Aaron	Shuʿayb	Jethro
Ibraḥīm	Abraham	Yaʿqūb	Jacob
ʿĪsā	Jesus	ʾAyūb	Job
Isḥāq	Isaac	Yūshaʿ	Joshua
Ismāʿīl	Ishmael	Yūsuf	Joseph
Jibrāʾīl	Gabriel	Zakariyyā	Zachariah
Maryam	Mary	ʿUzayr	Ezra

Arabic terms and names have been transliterated according to the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES).

For ease of reading, glyphs and traditional honorifics such as "peace be upon him" or (s.a.w.) which are commonly used as a gesture of respect after the name of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Imāms, or other sacred figures have been omitted from this text. No disrespect is intended, and may God's peace and blessings be upon them all!

Foreword

In this enriching second edition of Volume 12 of *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, readers are invited to delve into the profound interpretation of verses 106 to 120 of Sūrah Āl-Mā'idah. Continuing seamlessly from Volume 11, this volume encapsulates 'Allamah Tabataba'i's insightful exploration of intricate Islamic concepts and ethical discourses.

'Allamah Tabataba'i, with his signature depth and clarity, examines the multifaceted themes of testimony (*shahadah*), justice (*'adalah*), and the oath (*qasam*), tracing their historical evolution and contextual relevance. A highlight of this volume is the comprehensive ethical discourse spread across eight sections. Here, 'Allamah Tabataba'i delves into the moral fabric of prophetic conduct, with a special focus on the Prophet Muhammad's exemplary character, meticulously detailing 183 of his moral attributes as reflected in Islamic tradition.

A pivotal discussion in this volume is centered around verse 118 of Surah al-Ma'idah, shedding light on the complex subject of slavery. 'Allamah Tabataba'i approaches this topic with a blend of historical insight and social analysis, interpreting it through Qur'anic verses and traditions of the Prophet and the Imams (peace be upon them). His treatment of this sensitive subject is marked by originality and depth, showcasing his profound vision and nuanced style.

The volume concludes with a thought-provoking exploration of punishment (*mujazat*) and forgiveness (*'afw*), spread over seven sections. 'Allamah Tabataba'i's discussion navigates through these themes with logical rigor and comprehensive analysis, based on Qur'anic teachings, bringing the exegesis of Surah al-Ma'idah to a compelling close.

The Tawheed Institute extends its heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated team responsible for editing the first edition and bringing this new edition to fruition. We are confident that readers will embrace this edition with the same enthusiasm and eagerness that has come to be associated with 'Allamah Tabataba'i's timeless work.

As we present this volume, we invite you on a journey of discovery and reflection, guided by one of the most revered scholars of our time. May this

journey enrich your understanding and deepen your connection with the divine teachings of the Qur'an.

Tawheed Institute Australia Ltd
December, 2023

About the Translator

The late ʿAllāmah Sayyid Saʿīd Akhtār Rizvī was one of the most sincere preachers of Islam and an active scholar, both when he was in Tanzania in the Bilāl Muslim Mission (an Islamic organization active in Tanzania), and also when he returned to his own country of India. In the way of spreading Islam he has rendered enormous services and has been most active.

ʿAllāmah Sayyid Saʿīd Akhtār Rizvī had written scores of books and booklets in English, Urdu and Swahili, many of which have been published; and some other titles which have been published by WOFIS. Some of his books have been translated and published by in French, Italian, Japanese, Thai, Indonesian, Hausa and other languages.

About the Author

The late Islamic scholar, thinker, and philosopher, ʿAllāmah al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī came from the celebrated Ṭabāṭabāʾī family of Tabriz. For the last three centuries, this family has produced generation after generation of renowned religious scholars in Azerbaijan (Iran). They are descendants of the second Imām, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī (peace be on both of them). The clan is also referred to with the title, al-Qāḍī.

ʿAllāmah al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī was the son of al-Sayyid Muḥammad b. al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī. ʿAllāmah was born in Tabriz on 29 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1321/17 March 1904. His father died in 1330 (1912). The orphaned child grew up in Tabriz, and after completing his religious education there, around 1341 (1923), he went to Najaf (Iraq), the most important center of Shia religious learning.

In Najaf, he began his higher studies with such illustrious scholars as Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Nāʾīnī al-Gharawī (1277–1355/1860 or 1861–1936), the son of Shaykh al-Islām ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, and Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Gharawī al-Iṣfahānī (1296–1361/1878–1942), the son of al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Ḥasan, Muʿīn al-Tujjār.

These two were among the most prominent scholars in the Shia world. They were among the most prominent scholars not only in the fields of Shia jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence, but in all Islamic subjects. Their opinions and theories are still followed today. Each founded his own school of thought and trained thousands of Shia scholars and jurists; and all the *marājiʿ al-taqlīd*[1] of the Shia world, to this day, are their students. Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Gharawī al-Iṣfahānī was a philosopher, unsurpassed in his time; a man of literature; and a poet in Arabic and Persian; he was a genius whose achievements made others look up to him as their ideal. Shaykh Nāʾīnī, with his bold opinions and decrees in the political and social life of the Muslim *umma*, has carved for himself a niche in history.

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1 The highest authorities of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) whose rulings are followed by others. (Pub.)

ʿAllāmah al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī was much influenced by these two teachers, particularly by al-Iṣfahānī, in the development of his thought and knowledge. A third influence was that of al-Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Jaʿfar Khwānsārī (1313– 80/1895 or 1896–1961), the son of al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Mūsāwī, known as "the mathematician." ʿAllāmah al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī was proud to have studied mathematics with him, and also wrote a book on higher mathematics, in which he applied some special theories of his teacher.

ʿAllāmah studied philosophy and metaphysics from al-Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī Bādkūbahʾī; the latter was a student of al-Sayyid Riḍā, who studied with al-Sayyid Mūsā, a well known teacher of philosophy and related subjects. In the fields of ethics and spirituality, ʿAllāmah received his training from his relatives, al-Sayyid ʿAlī al-Qāḍī (1285–1366/1869–1947), a well-known scholar who established a school of spiritual and ethical training which still flourishes today.

All these influences combined to create in ʿAllāmah al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī a well-balanced academic and spiritual personality. He was a well-respected authority on religious subjects of jurisprudence and its fundamentals; a philosopher of independent views and new theories; and an inspired model of ethical and spiritual perfection. He not only taught morality, but also lived it. Yet it is also correct to state that his scholarship was overshadowed by his fame and prestige as a philosopher and a spiritual man.

ʿAllāmah al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī returned to Tabriz in 1353/1934, where he was welcomed as a religious scholar. There he spent his time teaching higher philosophy to willing disciples—but it was a small place for his talents. In 1364/1945 he migrated to Qum, the most important center of religious education in Iran. In Qum, he remained engaged in imparting the knowledge of ethics, philosophy, and the exegesis of the Qur'an to those students who had already attained a high level of erudition. There he remained until his death on Sunday, 18 Muḥarram 1402/15 November 1981. May God bestow His mercy on him. Amen.

Many religious leaders of the present generation were and are among his students and disciples, the most famous being the late Murtaḍā Muṭahharī (1338–99/1920–79).

ʿAllāmah al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī's fame rests on his academic works—the most important being his great exegesis of the Qur'an, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān.* It is said to be the foundation stone of the academic prestige

which ʿAllāmah al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī was accorded in the Muslim world.

Among his other works is *Uṣūl-i falsafah va ravish-i riʾalism* (Practical and Philosophical Principles of Realism). This book is a comparative study of Islamic philosophy and various modern anti-Islamic schools of thoughts, especially Marxism. His disciple, the late Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, annotated this work, thus making it easily accessible to the average man.

A third book, *Shiʿa dār Islām*, was first published in Persian; later it was published in English with the title, *Shiʾite Islam.* The ʿAllāmah wrote this book on the request of Professor Kenneth Morgan of Colgate University, to introduce Shiism to the West.

However, it is his *tafsīr, al-Mīzān* (published in 20 volumes in Arabic) which presents the true picture of the author's academic style and his way of thinking. In the preface to volume 1, the author outlines his plan, to explain the Qur'an with the help of the Qur'an itself. This he faithfully does, all the way through to the end of the *tafsīr*.

Chapter 5

Sūrah al-Māʾidah

almizan.org

Verses 106-109

بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Compassionate

The first three verses deal with affairs of testimony, and the last one is not without some connection with it in meaning.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا شَهَادَةُ بَيْنِكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ حِينَ
الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَانِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ أَوْ آخَرَانِ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ ضَرَبْتُمْ
فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۚ تَحْبِسُونَهُمَا مِنْ بَعْدِ الصَّلَاةِ
فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ إِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ لَا نَشْتَرِي بِهِ ثَمَنًا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۙ وَلَا
نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا إِذًا لَمِنَ الْآثِمِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ فَإِنْ عُثِرَ عَلَىٰ أَنَّهُمَا اسْتَحَقَّا
إِثْمًا فَآخَرَانِ يَقُومَانِ مَقَامَهُمَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَوْلَيَانِ
فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ لَشَهَادَتُنَا أَحَقُّ مِنْ شَهَادَتِهِمَا وَمَا اعْتَدَيْنَا إِنَّا إِذًا لَمِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

(5:106–107) O you who believe! Call to witness between you when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you, or two others from among others than you, if you are travelling in the land and the calamity of death befalls you; the two witnesses you should detain after the prayer; then if you doubt (them), they shall both swear by Allah, (saying): "We will not take for it a price, though there be a relative, and we will not hide the testimony of Allah, for then certainly we should be among the sinners." Then if it becomes known that they both have been guilty of a sin, two others shall stand up in their place

> from among those who have a claim against them, the two nearest in kin; so they two should swear by Allah: "Certainly our testimony is truer than the testimony of those two, and we have not exceeded the limit, for then most surely we should be of the unjust"

The gist of the two verses is as follows: If a Muslim is on journey and wants to make a will, he must call to witness, at the time of will, two just witnesses from among the Muslims; if he does not find them, then he should call two witnesses from among the People of the Book. If the near relatives of the deceased feel some doubt about the will, the two witnesses shall be detained after the prayer, they shall swear by God for their truth in witnessing, and the discord will be removed. Then if it becomes known that the two witnesses have lied in testimony, then two other witnesses shall stand up in the place, and testify against them swearing in the name of God.

This apparently is the connotation of the two verses. The phrases: "O you who believe," addresses the believers and the law is reserved to them. "Call to witness between you when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you": It means, witness between you is witness of two just persons from among you; there is an omitted but understood *muḍāf* (first construct of a genitive), that is, two just persons from among you. It means that the required number of witnesses is two; thus the *maṣdar* here gives meaning of active participle, as they say, a just man, two just men.

The phrase: "*when death draws nigh to one of you*," is an allusion for drawing near to you the cause for making will, because people naturally do not get involved in such things unless there appears something which indicates death's nearness; usually it means serious illness which brings man nearer to death.

The clause: "*at the time of making the will*," is an adverbial phrase of time, related to "witness," that is, witness at the time of making the will. The *maṣdar, al-'adl* means probity, and the context shows that it means probity and rectitude in religious affairs. This, in its turn, ascertains (the phrase) "from among you" and (the phrase) "from among others than you" means from among the Muslims and the non-Muslims respectively, and not near relatives and clan; God has mentioned "two" parallel to "two others," then has described the former as "just persons" and "from among you," while the latter has only been described as "from among others than

you" without the qualification of justice. The qualification of probity or otherwise in religious affairs differs in the Muslim and the non-Muslim; there is no reason why probity in religious affairs should be necessary if the witnesses were from among the relatives or clan of the principal, but unnecessary if the witness were a non-relative.

Accordingly, the phrase: "*or two others from among others than you*," presents an alternative with sequence. The meaning is: If there are Muslims, two of them shall be made witnesses; but if there is none other than non-Muslims then two of them will be called to witness; all this is understood from the associations.

This very association gives the understanding that the clause: "*if you are travelling in the land and the calamity of death befalls you*," is a restriction related to the words: "*or two others from among others than you*"; a Muslim usually lives in a Muslim society, and normally in a Muslim environment there does not arise a need to call two non-Muslims to act as witnesses; contrary to the condition of travelling when such chances or emergencies may occur and the need may arise to approach non-Muslims for witnessing, etc.

The same association, that is, affinity between the subject and the order, joined with the taste perceived from the divine speech, proves that the word, non-Muslims, here exclusively points to the People of the Book, because the divine speech does not bestow any nobility to the polytheists.

The clause: "*they shall both swear by God*," that is, the two witnesses shall swear; the clause: "*then if you doubt*," that is, if you are in doubt about what the executor of the will describes concerning the will, or about the property governed by the will, or about its condition; what they shall swear to, is explained in the next sentence: "We will not take for it a price though there be a relative ...," that is, We will not accept any big or small price for testifying for the claim of the executor of the will, even if he be a relative of ours. Selling the testimony for a price indicates that the witness turns aside from the truth in his testimony for a worldly goal, like wealth, prestige or feeling of relationship; thus he offers his testimony in exchange of a worldly price, and it is a small price indeed.

An exegete has said that the pronoun, *it*, (in the phrase: *We will not take for it*) refers to the oath, that is, We will not take for our oath a price; but it would entail swearing twice by God, and the verse does not give any such hint.

The clause: "and we will not hide the testimony of God," that is, by testifying against the reality and truth; "for then certainly we should be among the sinners," that is, carriers of sin. This sentence is in conjunction with, "We will not take for it a price, ..." as an explicative apposition.

In the possessive case: "the testimony of God," 'the testimony' is related to "God," because God testifies for the reality as the two witnesses do it; therefore it is the testimony of God as it is the testimony of the two witnesses; and God has more right to possession; thus it is His testimony by right and primarily, and the testimony of the two witnesses follows it secondarily. God has said: ... *and Allah is sufficient as a witness.* (4:79); ... *and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases;* ... (2:255).

Alternatively, it may be because witnessing it is a right of God imposed on His servants and it is incumbent on them to offer it with truth without alteration, without hiding it. It is as we say, religion of God, thus we ascribe the religion to God although it is the servants who are covered by it. God says: ... *and give upright testimony for Allah...* . (65:2); ... *and do not conceal testimony,* (2:283).

The clause, "*Then if it becomes known ...*": *al-'uthūr* followed by preposition *'alā* means to get something, to find something. This verse elaborates the law if it becomes known that the two witnesses have lied and testified wrongly.

The clause, "*that they both have been guilty of a sin*": *Istiḥqāq* (to be entitled; to deserve); *al-ithm* (sin); to be entitled to a sin means to commit a sin or crime; it is said: The man deserved a sin, that is, he committed a sin; Zayd deserved a sin against Bakr, that is, Zayd committed a crime against Bakr. That is why in the coming sentence it has taken the preposition *'alā*, as it says: two others shall stand up in their place "*from among those who have a claim against them*," that is, those against whom the two witnesses have sinned by giving false testimony and perfidy. The basic meaning of *istaḥaqqa al-rajul* is as follows: The man demanded that the sin or its punishment be established and confirmed against him. Accordingly it is here an extended metaphor in which demand is used for describing the thing demanded, and path is mentioned in place of destination. The word, sin, in the clause: "that they both have been guilty of a sin," is inferred from the preceding clause: "for then certainly we should be among the sinners."

The words: "*two others shall stand up in their place*," that is, if it is found that the two witnesses have committed perjury and perfidy, then two other witnesses shall stand in their place for swearing that the first two have committed perjury and perfidy.

The clause: "*from among those who have a claim against them*," denotes situation, that is, while these two new witnesses against whom the first two had committed perfidy, and who are nearest in kin to the deceased according to the will, as al-Rāzī has stated in his *tafsīr*. In short, it denotes that if it was known that the two witnesses have committed perjury and perfidy against the near relatives of the deceased, then two other witnesses shall stand up in their place from among those against whom the first two have committed that perjury, before their guilt was known.

This interpretation is based on the recital of ʿĀṣim from Ḥafṣ who has recited *ustuḥiqqa* in passive voice; then the apparent context would make, "the first two" the subject and its predicate would be, "two others shall stand up in their place." The meaning: If it becomes known that the two witnesses have committed perjury and perfidy against the near relatives of the deceased, then two near relatives of the deceased shall stand up in their place against whom the perfidy was committed.

In the recital of ʿĀṣim through Abū Bakr, Ḥamzah, Khalaf and Ya'qūb, *al-awlayān* is recited *al-awwalīn* (the first ones, opposite to the last ones), and apparently it means the nearest of kin who have first claim (on the deceased's estate); it is adjective or appositional substantive standing for "those who."

The exegetes have written much numerous modes and aspects so far as the construction of various parts of the verse is concerned; so much so that if some aspects are multiplied by the others in order to infer the full meaning of the verse, it would result in hundreds of aspects. al-Zajjāj has reportedly said that it is the most complicated verse of the Divine Book so far as its construction is concerned.

What we have written in its explanation is manifestly clear from the context, without any aberration or arbitrariness; we have avoided thoroughly looking at all the possibilities, which they have mentioned, because it would only increase the vagueness of the word, leaving a scholar

bewildered.[1]

From the clause: "*two others shall stand up in their place*," sprouts the clause: "*so they two should swear by God*"; it means the two other witnesses, nearest in kin to the deceased; they should swear by God that certainly our testimony (which unmasks the falsity and perfidy of the first two witnesses) is truer than that of the first two concerning the aspects of the will; and we have not exceeded the limit against them by testifying contrary to what they had testified, otherwise, most surely we should be among the unjust people.

ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِالشَّهَادَةِ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهَا أَوْ يَخَافُوا أَنْ تُرَدَّ أَيْمَانٌ بَعْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْمَعُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

(5:108) This is more proper in order that they should give testimony truly or fear that other oaths be given after their oaths; and fear Allah, and hear; and Allah does not guide the transgressing people.

The verse describes the underlying reason of the preceding rule. It says that this law, with the sequence prescribed by God, is the safest way of arriving at the truth in this place, and is the nearest method of ensuring that the first two witnesses would not commit injustice in their testimony, as they would be afraid that, otherwise their testimony would be refuted and rejected.

Man is entangled in his desire; the desire invites him to enjoy whatever he can, and grasp to whatever he longs for, provided there is nothing to divert him from it; it makes no difference whether he has any right to that desired item or not, whether it is based on justice or injustice even by nullifying someone else's right. The man desists from that transgression and exceeding the limit either because of some exterior thing which prevents him from it through punishment or chastisement, or because of some inner prohibition from his own soul; and the strongest psychological prohibitive factor is the belief in God to Whom the servants have to return and Who takes reckoning of the deeds, decides with justice and awards full recompense.

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1 If anybody wants to know those details, he should refer to the *Tafsīr Rūḥu al-ma'ānī*, vol.7 (by al-Ālūsī), *Majma'u al-bayān* (by al-Ṭabrisī), *Mafātīḥu al-ghayb* (by al-Rāzī) and other detailed books. (Auth.)

If, as is supposed at this juncture, the reality about the deceased's will is unknown and the only way to find it is through the testimony of the two witnesses whom the deceased had appointed, then the strongest way of keeping their testimony nearer to truth is to compel them to swear by God, and to make the nearest of kin of the deceased swear by God if it transpires that the first two witnesses have committed perjury and perfidy. Thus, these two methods, that is, their oaths in the beginning and then returning the oath to the nearest of kin, are the most effective ways to keep the first two witnesses on truth, as they would be afraid to be ignominiously exposed and their oaths refuted. These two are the strongest factors to prevent them from deviation from truth.

Then God ended the speech with the admonition and warning: *and fear Allah, and hear; and Allah does not guide the transgressing people.*

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ ۖ قَالُوا لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿١٠٩﴾

(5:109) On the day when Allah will assemble the messengers, then say: "What answer were you given?" They shall say: "We have no knowledge, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things."

The verse is not averse to be connected with the previous subject; although the end part of the preceding verse: "*and fear God, and hear*," is general, yet the context denotes that it contains prohibition of deviation, committing injustice in witnessing or disdaining the oath by the name of God. Thus it is appropriate to describe what is to take place between God and His messengers, who shall be witnesses over their nations, and what an excellent witnesses they are! God shall ask them what answer they were given by their people, and although they knew very well what their people had done, and they were appointed by God to be their witnesses, yet they will reply by saying: "'*We have no knowledge, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things*.'"

The matters being like this and with God being the Knower of everything, it is appropriate for the witnesses to be afraid of divine majesty, and not to deviate from the truth which God has given them the knowledge of; they should not conceal the testimony of God, otherwise they would be one of the sinners, unjust and tyrants.

The divine words: "*On the day when God will assemble ...*," is an adverb of time, related to the preceding clauses: "*and fear God ...*" The verse speaks of assembling of the messengers (instead of saying, when God will say to the messengers), as it has more affinity with gathering of the witnesses for testimony, as shown by the words: *the two witnesses you should detain after the prayer; ... they shall both swear by Allah.*

As for the messengers' negating the knowledge from themselves, when they shall say: "*We have no knowledge, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things.*" They restrict the knowledge of all unseen things exclusively to God, and it proves that the negated is not the knowledge *per se,* because the clause: "*surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things,*" apparently aims at explaining the reason of negation; and it is understood that confinement of the knowledge of all unseen things does not entail removal of all knowledge from other than God, especially so when it is a knowledge of testimony; and what will be asked, that is, how the people answered their messengers, is related to the testimony not to the unseen.

Their reply: "*We have no knowledge*," does not negate knowledge in general; it negates the truly inside knowledge which is not without some relationship with the unseen. It is known that the knowledge discloses to the knower the reality as much as it is related to a certain affair concerning its causes and concomitants; and the reality is interconnected with all parts present externally, whether they precede the reality in external existence or are found simultaneously; knowledge of any external affair, in true sense, does not occur except by comprehending all parts of its existence and acquiring comprehension of its Maker—far be it from His majesty that anything could ever comprehend Him, and it is an affair beyond the human power. Thus, man has not been given knowledge in this universe —the universe thinking on whose vast dimension leaves him flabbergasted, looking at the magnitude of its stars and galaxies makes him scared, if he observes its minute items his reason is bewildered, and if he wants to walk between these two extremes he becomes giddy —except a little that is needed by him in the journey of his life, just as a walker in utterly dark night carries a small candle which gives him only enough light to see where to put his next step.

What the human knowledge is connected to, adheres with its being, and attaches with its reality to its fringes and then to the fringes of the fringes

and so on. All of it is unperceived by human perceptions. Knowledge, in its true meaning, cannot be attached to anything except when it is connected to all its unseen factors of existence, and this is not possible for any limited creature, be it human or something else, except God, the One, the Subduer, with Him are the keys of the unseen, none but He knows them. God says: *and Allah knows, while you do not know* (2:216). The verse shows that man's nature is ignorance, and he is not given knowledge except to a limited measured quantity. God says: *There is not a thing but its treasures are with Us, and We do not send it down but according to known measures* (15:21). The same is the connotation of the infallible's reply when he was asked, "Why God is concealed from His creatures?" He said: "Because surely He has built their structure on ignorance." God has also said: ... *and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except that which He pleases;* (2:255). It shows that knowledge, all of it, belongs to God and man comprehends out of it only what God wills. Also He says: ... *and you have not been given the knowledge but a little* (17:85). This proves that there is a multitude of knowledge, but man has not been given except a little.

So, the reality is this: knowledge, the real one, is not found except with God. When the Day of Resurrection comes, the things will appear in their true forms and shapes, as the related verses show. Thus, there would not be on that day any place except for the true speech, as God says: *they shall not speak except he whom the Beneficent Lord gives leave, and he will speak the truth. That is the certain day*, (78:38–39).

That is why when the messengers shall be asked, "*What answer were you given?*" the true reply will be to repudiate from themselves all knowledge as it will be a part of the unseen, and to affirm it to their Load, by saying: "*We have no knowledge, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things.*"

This reply of theirs, emanates from their humility before His Grandeur and Majesty; it is a confession of their personal neediness and essential nullity *vis-à-vis* their True Master; keeping the manner of His audience and displaying the truth of the matter. However, it is not a final answer shutting the door to further replies, because:

First: Because God has made them witnesses for their people, as He says in this Book: *How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a*

witness, and We bring you as a witness over those (*witnesses*)? (4:41); *... and the book* (*of deeds*) *shall be set up, and the prophets and the witnesses shall be summoned ...* (39:69). And there is no meaning of making them witnesses except that they should be witnesses over their people—as the witnessing should be on that day. Inevitably they will testify on that day as God has ordained it. Thus, their reply, "We have no knowledge," is based on the manner of worshipful homage *vis-à-vis* the True King in whose hand is command and kingdom on that day. It also explains the reality of the affair, that is, God possesses knowledge by Himself, and others possess it only as much as He makes them have it; and there is no wrong if, after this reply, they disclose what knowledge they had of the conditions of their people. This supports what we have previously written in the first volume of this book, under the verse: *And thus we have made you a justly medium nation so that you may be witnesses over mankind, and so that the Messenger may be a witness over you, ...* (2:143), where we have explained that this knowledge and witnessing are not of the type of knowledge and witnessing as we understand them; rather they are of the knowledge which is particularly reserved to God and which is bestowed to a group of His honored servants.

Second: Because God has confirmed that a group of his nearer servants will possess knowledge on the Day of Resurrection. He says: *And those who have been given knowledge and faith will say: Verily you have tarried according to the decree of Allah till the Day of Resurrection, ...*" (30:56); *... and on the heights shall be men who know them all by their marks* (7:46); *And those whom they invoke beside Him do not own any power of intercession, save he who bears witness to the truth, and they know the truth* (43:86); and Jesus son of Mary is included in this verse, and he was a messenger; therefore he is among those who bear witness to the truth and they know the truth; *And the Messenger shall say: "O my Lord! Verily my people took this Qur'ān as a thing abandoned."* (25:30). The 'Messenger' refers to the Messenger of God, and his speech quoted in this verse is exactly the reply to the question contained in the verse under discussion, that is, the divine words: "*What answer were you given?*" Now, it is clear that the words of the Messengers: "*We have no knowledge, ...*" is not the final answer, as described above.

Third: Because the Qur'an mentions that the questioning will cover both the Messengers and those to whom they were sent. God says: *Then*

surely We shall question those to whom (*Our messengers*) *were sent, and certainly We will also question the messengers* (7:6). Also, He mentions many replies given by the people to whom the messengers were sent of many questions asked of them; and replying entails knowledge and questioning confirms it. Also, God says: *Certainly, you were heedless of this* (*day*), *now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight is sharp today* (50:22); *And could you but see when the guilty will stand before their Lord, heads hung low,* (*and say*): "*O our Lord! We have seen and we have heard; now send us back; we will do good; verily now we are convinced.*" (32:12). There are many verses of similar theme. Now, when the people—and especially the guilty among them—were having knowledge on that day, how could it be imagined that the honored messengers would be lacking that knowledge. Thus the end result is the same as we have said.

A Talk on the Meaning of Testimony

The society in which we live, and the interaction that takes place between our active powers in general aspects of this worldly life, pushes us willy-nilly to various kinds of discords and disputes. What one of us exclusively enjoys, often another one wants to share it with him, or even acquire it solely for himself, displacing the original owner. This made man realize that jurisprudential judgements and decrees were essential for settling such disputes.

The first requirement for judging a case is that the events and occurrences should be preserved exactly as they took place and recorded in a way that no change or alteration sneaks in them, in order that the judge may decide accordingly. No body can doubt its importance.

This can be ensured only through making someone look at the event: He observes the episode and takes upon himself to convey the report truly when need arises, or records it in some other way, like writing or using other instruments which serve the same purpose (like audio or video cassettes, etc.).

There are some important differences between witnessing and other means of preservation and recording: First, The means of preservation and recording, other than witnessing, are not available generally; its most common and well known method is writing, but even today it has not covered the whole mankind, let alone the ancient times, contrary to the witnessing. Second, Rendering testimony, that is, description with tongue by a witness through his undertaking to convey the fact truly and based on his memory,

is less likely to be affected by any defectiveness and more secured against various afflictions in comparison to writing and other means of recording.

That is why we see that no nation shuns giving credence to testimony—it is true in all nations, despite their excessive discord in sociological customs, tribal and religious dispositions and progress or regress in culture and barbarism—in short every group gives some credence to testimonies.

Consideration is given in this respect to someone who is counted as a member of the nation and part of the group. That is why no importance is given to the evidence of a child below the age of discretion or to that of an insane who does not know what he speaks. The same is the reason why some barbarous nations did not recognize women's evidence, as they did not accept women as part of the society; and most of the social norms in ancient nations were based on the same thinking, like Rome, Greece and other regions.

Now, Islam is the natural religion, and as such recognizes testimony, and accepts this alone as the definite proof, while all other means of substantiation and corroboration have no value unless and until they create "Knowledge." God says: *... and establish the evidence for Allah; ...* (65:2); *... and do not conceal evidence, and whoever conceals it, then surely his heart is sinful; ...* (2:283); *And those who stand firm in their testimonies* (70:33).

Islam has fixed the number of two for witnesses regarding all affairs except fornication (where the required number is four) so that each supports the other. God says: *... then call to witness two witnesses from among your men, and if there are not two men, then one man and two women from among those whom you choose to be witnesses, so that should one of the two forgets the* (*second*) *of the two may remind the other; and the witnesses should not refuse when they are summoned; and be not averse to writing it* (*whether it be*) *small or large, with the time of its falling due. This* (*procedure*) *is more equitable in the sight of Allah, and assures greater accuracy in testimony, and the nearest* (*way*) *to not entertaining any doubts* (*afterwards*)*; ...* (2:282). It shows that what the verse explains and lays down in respect of the laws of witnessing, including the addition of one witness to the other to make them two, is more in conformity with justice, rendering of testimony and removal of doubt.

When Islam looks at the individual members of the society—who are the bricks to build the society—it counts women among them, and

bestows on her the right, like the men, to render the witness. At the same time, it has decided that the society created by it should be founded on understanding, rather than emotions. A woman is an emotional human being; and therefore it has given her half the right and weight of man; thus two women's testimonies equal to that of a man, as the above quoted verse points to: so that should one of the two forgets, the (second) of the two may remind the other. In the fourth volume of this, we have written on the right of woman in Islam, which will be useful here. Witnessing has many detailed laws, which are elaborated in the books of jurisprudence, which is beyond the limit of this discussion here.

A Talk on Justice

A research scholar in Islamic Laws often comes across the word Justice; and he often finds different definitions and diverse explanations of this word, depending on diversity of the scholars and their ways.

But what is appropriate at this juncture of the Qur'anic discourse—in analysis of its meaning and the way of its application to the nature on which Islam is based—is that we should adopt another way of explanation. So we say:

al-'Adālah is moderation and middle position between two modes of high and low, and two sides of exaggeration and shortfall. It has a real value and great weight in human societies. The via media, the moderate position, is the substantial ingredient or the core around which the social structure is built. A noble man of high rank who would be dressed in high social virtues, and represent the utmost wish of society, is not born every day; such a person appears on the scene only rarely and it is known that society is not made up of a rare person even if he be looked up as a cardinal organ wherever he be found.

On the other side is a vile and despicable person who does not uphold social rights, and who does not fulfil the average aspirations of the society. He does not have any caller inviting him to observe the general social principles on which depends the life of society; nor does he have any deterrent which would prevent him from committing social sins which destroy the society and nullify the essential mutual attraction between its ingredients; in short, no trust can be had for his being a part of the body of society, nor can one rely on his good influence and proper advice.

(We find, after leaving these two high and low ranks aside, that) the rule is exercised by the medium rank of the society on whom depends the society's structure, and who fulfil its aims and aspirations; and it is through them that its good effects take place—its ingredients and organs have not come together except for achieving this goal and enjoying it.

A member of the society cannot entertain any doubt about it when he looks at it even once.

It is self-evident to him that he, in his social life, greatly depends on some individual members of the society on whose social deportment he relies—they are covered with moderation in affairs, are cautious against being indifferent to breaking the laws or violation of prevalent customs and manners in various fields like jurisprudence, judgement and testimonies, etc.

This imperative or nearly imperative quality demanded by nature is what Islam looks for in a witness. God says: *... and call to witness two just men from among you, and establish the evidence as before Allah. Thus is admonished he who believes in Allah and the last day; ...* (65:2); *... when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you, ...* (5:106). Both these verses are addressed to those who believe. Therefore, the condition that the witnesses should be two just men from among them implies that they should have a moderate and medium position *vis-à-vis* their religious society; but as for its position *vis-à-vis* national or political society, Islam does not care for such non-religious relationships. Apparently, if the witnesses are on a medium position *vis-à-vis* the religious society, they must be from among those whose religiosity is relied upon and who do not indulge in major sins, which adversely affect the religion. God says: *If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden, We will remit from you your* (*minor*) *sins and We will make you enter an honorable entering* (4:31). We have described the meaning of major sins under this verse in the fourth volume of this book.

This meaning is evident in the divine words: *Those who accuse chaste women* (*and*) *then do not bring four witnesses, scourge them with eighty stripes, and do not accept their testimony for ever and they are the transgressors. Save those who afterwards repent and make amends. So Allah is Oft-forgiving, Merciful* (24:4–5).

Similar to the previous verse which lays down the condition of justice

and probity, is the divine word: *from among those whom you are pleased with to be witnesses, ...* (2:282), because the pleasure mentioned here means pleasure of a religious society; and it is known that a religious society, *per se*, will not be pleased with anyone unless he behaves in a manner that makes him trustworthy in religious affairs.

It is what we call in *fiqh* the faculty of *'adālah*. It is other than what is called *'adālah* in Ethics. The *'adālah* of *fiqh* is the psychological aspect which in common point of view prevents one from committing major sins; and the *'adālah* of Ethics is the deep-rooted trait of character in reality.

What we have inferred from the meaning of *'adālah* is what is understood from the *madhhab* of the Imāms of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) as is reported through their chains:

(1) (al-Ṣadūq) narrates in *Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh*, through his chains from Ibn Abī Ya'fūr, that he said: "I said to Abū 'Abdillāh, 'By what is known the *'adālah* of a man among the Muslims, so that his testimony is accepted for and against them?' He said:

"(It is) that they recognize him with covering and abstinence, and control of stomach, and genitals, and hand, and tongue; and he is known to avoid major sins for whom God has threatened the Fire, as drinking liquor, fornication, interest, disobedience of parents, fleeing from *jihād* and so on.

"And it is known from the fact that he conceals all his defects, in order that the Muslims are forbidden to search for his slips and defects, and are obliged to pronounce his integrity, and declare his *'adālah* among the people; and he is considered regular in the five prayers when he diligently prays and preserves their times with attending the Muslims' congregational prayers, and does not remain behind from their congregation in their prayer place except because of some (genuine) cause.

"When he is like that, inseparable from his place of prayer at the advent of the five prayers; when he is asked about in his tribe and quarter, they would say: "We did not see from him except good," (he is) regular in his prayers, waiting for their times in his prayer place, then surely it would make his testimony valid, and (establish) his *'adālah* among the Muslims. And it is because prayer is a curtain and expiation of sins. And it is not possible to testify about a man that he prays if he does not come to his prayer place and does not

regularly attend the Muslims' congregation.

"Congregation and gathering for prayer has been prescribed only for this purpose that he who prays may be distinguished from him who does not pray; and he who preserves the times of prayer from him who neglects it. And if it were not so, no one could testify for the goodness of the other, because he who does not pray has no goodness among the Muslims. Verily the Messenger of God had intended to burn a group in their houses because they avoided attending the Muslims' congregations; and there were among them people who used to pray in their homes, but it was not accepted from them. Therefore, how can evidence or probity of someone be accepted among the Muslims about whom decision of God, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, and of His Messenger was taken to burn (him) with fire inside his house? And he used to say: "There is no prayer for him who does not pray in the mosque with the Muslims except because of some reason (illness)." (*Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh*)

Author's comment: al-Shaykh has narrated it in *al-Tahdhīb* with some addition, which we have left out. Covering and abstinence both mean avoidance, as (Jawharī) has said in *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*. As you see, the tradition makes basic *'adālah* a thing which is well known among the Muslims; and shows that the effect resulting from it and which proves this psychological characteristic is avoidance of the things prohibited by God, and abstention from forbidden desires; and it is recognized through avoidance of major sins; then proof of all this is seen in (his) good appearance among the Muslims, as the Imām has described it in detail.

(2) 'Abdullāh b. al-Mughīrah narrates from Abu al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā that he said: "He who was born on f*iṭrah* (that is, of Muslim parent) and is known with goodness in himself, his evidence is allowed." (ibid.)

(3) Sumā'ah has narrated through Abū Baṣīr from Abū 'Abdillāh that he said: "There is nothing wrong with evidence of an old (or weak) person when he is righteous and chaste." (ibid.)

(4) (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from 'Alī b. Mahziyār from Abū 'Alī b. Rāshid that he said: "I said to Abū Ja'far: 'Verily, your followers are of different types; so should I pray with them all?' He said: 'Don't pray except behind him of whose religion you are

confident.'"(*al-Kāfī*)

Author's comment: The tradition clearly indicates what we have explained above. There are other topics in it, which are beyond our theme here.

A Talk on Oaths

What do you mean when you say: 'By my life, it is so'; or 'By my life, the thing is as I have said?' It means that you somehow attach that statement in its truthfulness to your life—which has a great position and dignity in your eyes—in such a way that they become inseparable in existence and non-existence; if you were wrong in your statement, you would nullify the dignity of your life and its honor in your eyes, and thus would fall down from the level of humanity which demands respect for life's affairs.

When you say, 'I adjure you by God to do (or, not to do) this thing', it means that you have attached your order or prohibition to the dignity and honor which God has in the believers' eyes; in this way if anyone goes against that order or prohibition it would be an insult to the divine position and would negate the sanctity of the belief in God.

Likewise, when you say, 'By God! I'll do such and such', you affect a special connection between your intention to do it and the dignity and honor which God has in your eyes according to your belief in Him, so much so that if you cancel your intention it would entail a negation of the divine dignity in your eyes. Its purpose is to create a deterrent against cancellation of that plan. Thus, oath creates a special connection between a statement and another thing which has a dignity and honor in such a way that if the former is nullified, the latter too would be negated; and because the latter has such a dignity and honor that the person concerned would not be pleased by its loss of dignity or by an insult to it, therefore he is truthful in what he says and is obeyed in what he orders or forbids, or is bound to implement what he plans. So the oath results in intensified emphasis.

In some languages, there is found another kind of connection *vis-à-vis* oath; it connects the statement with something which has no value or importance at all in the eyes of the speaker; it is done to show the contempt or disdain of the information given or received—it is a sort of abuse and it is very rare in Arabic language.

Swearing and oath, as we know, is a prevalent custom on people's tongue, which is inherited generation after generation; and it is not

particular to one language beside others. It proves that it is not something related to a language; rather man is led to it by his social life on occasions when he realizes the need to seek refuge in it and get its benefit.

Throughout history, the practice of taking oaths has been common across various nations. They were used in a range of situations within their societies, serving purposes such as exonerating someone from blame, dispelling slander, self-assurance, or reinforcing a piece of information. This practice was somewhat arbitrary until it was formalized by civil laws. Nowadays, oaths have been given a legal status and are particularly prominent during significant events, such as the swearing-in of Presidents and Executives when they are appointed to high-ranking positions and assume major responsibilities.

Islam places significant emphasis on oaths, especially those sworn in the name of God. This reverence stems from the religion's deep respect for the Majesty of God and its commitment to safeguarding the divine grandeur from any inappropriate associations. Consequently, Islam prescribes specific atonement measures for breaking such oaths and discourages frequent swearing in God's name, reflecting the solemnity with which it regards these commitments. God says: *Allah does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths; so its expiation* (*for breaking an oath*) *is the feeding of ten poor men out of the average* (*food*) *you feed your families with, or their clothing, or the freeing a neck; ...* (5:89). *And make not Allah in your oaths a hindrance against that you may do good and ...* (2:224).

Islam has recognized oath in those cases of litigation where there is no proof. God says: *... so they two should swear by Allah: "Certainly our testimony is truer than the testimony of those two, and we have not exceeded the limit, ..."* (5:107). And the Prophet has said: "The proof is on the claimant, and oath is on him who denies."

The essence of recognition of oath is that only the oath is a sufficient proof in cases where no other proof exists. The religious society is founded on individuals' belief in God, and a believer is a part of this composite whole; he is the fountainhead from which spring forth the customs which are followed and laws which are enforced; in short, all signs which appear in the community and which rise from their religious condition. It is not unlike a secular society that is based on people's belief in their national

objects, and from which the social laws and customs as well as the manners and culture are born which are found in it.

Given this context, just as it is acceptable to depend on individuals' oaths in various social matters and everyday life scenarios, it is also reasonable to rely on their oaths in situations where no other reliable proof is available. In instances where proof is absent, the oath becomes crucial. The denier, in this case, links their denial of a claim to their faith in such a manner that should the falsity of their denial become evident, their belief in God can no longer be deemed trustworthy.

As he ties his belief and faith with that oath, he pawns his faith putting it under the control of the pawn-broker, and its return to the borrower depends on his true promise and repayment of the loan within the agreed period; otherwise the pawned property goes and he remains empty handed.

Likewise, the one who swears is considered as if he has pawned his faith in exchange of what he has sworn for until its falsity is found out; when its falsity appears, he becomes empty handed from faith, falls down from the height of reliability, is deprived of enjoying the fruit of belief; in other words, in the religious society he loses all social benefits; he is banished from the well-knit society; neither the sky puts him under its shadow nor the earth accepts his burden.

This discourse is supported by what used to happen at the time of the Prophet, when people openly showed their hatred for those who stayed behind from religious assemblies like congregational prayer, *jihād* and so on; as it was the time when religion had total domination and authority over desires.

But what is the situation nowadays? Religion has lost its hold; base desires have seeped into hearts; we are living in a society composed of religious objectives (whose structure is weakened and people have turned away from it) and modern civilization's objectives. It is submerged in material enjoyments whose foundation is strong and general public eagerly proceeds towards it. Then there appeared severe quarrel and dispute between religious factors and modern civilization, in which constantly the latter is winning and the former retreating. The religious system that was supposed to dominate the society lost it coherence, and chaos and confusion appeared in spiritual affairs. In this condition, neither oath nor anything stronger can be of any benefit; there remains nothing to protect the people's rights.

People have lost confidence not in the religious safeguards found in society, but even in modern laws.

However, the divine rules and *sharī'ah* cannot be abrogated merely by the people's turning away from it or by their being tired of it. Verily the religion with God is Islam, He is not pleased with disbelief for his servant, and if Truth had followed their desires the heavens and the earth would have perished. Certainly, Islam is a religion which deals with all conditions of human life, it explains them and describes their laws—the laws that consist of parts which are in conformity with each other, are interlinked and mutually complementary; they are alive with spirit of monotheism. If one part ails the whole becomes sick; if some portions become rotten, it adversely affects the whole—just like a human body.

If a limb of body starts ailing or becomes decayed, it is essential to preserve the healthy parts and treat the ailing one; it is not correct in reason to leave the ailing limb as it is and also neglect the healthy parts.

Islam is the True Religion, of easy laws and forgiving nature; its *sharī'ah* has various vast degrees; its responsibilities are assessed according to what one has the ability to do. Its rope is stretched from secured social condition (where its laws and rules comprehensively cover all situations without exception) to individual conditions of emergency (when prayer is allowed by sign); but coming down from a high step to a lower one is conditional to emergency that removes responsibility and allows respite and extension. God says: *He who disbelieves in Allah after he has believed—except he who has been forced* (*to do so*)*, while his heart remains firm in faith—and opens* (*his*) *breast for disbelief, will suffer the wrath of Allah. For them there shall be a great torment ... Then, verily your Lord—to those who migrated after being persecuted, then they strived hard and endured patiently—verily, your Lord, after that, is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful* (16:106, 110).

As for those who base their lives on materialistic enjoyment, then try to justify the rejection of its opposite religious factors by saying that it does not agree with prevalent customs of the present world, they merely follow the materialistic logic, and not the religious one.

There is a discourse related to this chapter that emanates from some people's claim that swearing by other than God's name is a sort of polytheism, ascribing a partner to God. It is necessary to ask this speaker what he means by polytheism, which he claims in this context.

Does he mean that: Swearing by other than God (aggrandizement of

the one sworn by and showing greatness to his affairs, as the meaning of oath is based on it) contains a sort of humbleness and worship to him, and it is polytheism? But not every aggrandizement is polytheism. It can be polytheistic only when grandeur of independent Lordship is ascribed to someone other than God, with the idea that he is self-sufficient and does not require anyone's help.

God has sworn (in His Book) by a lot of His creations, like the sky, the earth, the sun, the moon, the disappearing orbiting stars, and the star when it goes down; He has sworn by the mountain, the river, the fig, the olive, and the horse. Also, He has taken oath by the night and day, by morning, by the evening glow, by the afternoon and forenoon; by the Day of Resurrection and the soul; He has sworn by the Book and the Great Qur'an, by the life of the Prophet and the angels, and many such things in numerous verses—while no oath can be valid without some aggrandizement.

So, what is there to prevent us from proceeding on the way God has used in His speech? Why should not we show greatness of some things, which God has bestowed on them, and stop at that? If such expressions were polytheistic, the divine speech should have avoided it in the first place!

Also, God has shown the greatness of many things in His Book, like the Qur'an, the Throne, and the manners of the Prophet. He has said: ... *and the mighty Qur'ān* (15:87); ... *And He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne* (9:129); ... *and surely you are on a mighty morality* (68:4). He has prescribed for His prophets and messengers and for the believers rights on Himself, and has shown their greatness and dignity, as He has said: *And certainly Our word has already gone forth about Our servants, the messengers, that verily they shall be helped* (37:171–172); ... *and it was incumbent on Us to help the believers* (30:47). Why should not we show their grandeur and follow the divine way in swearing in general? What is there to stop us from adjuring Him by something He Himself has sworn by? Or by one of the rights He has prescribed for His friends on Himself?

Of course, the jurisprudential oath that has legal effects in the fields of oath or judgement is not valid by name of other than God, as is explained in *fiqh*, but we are not talking about that.

If the objector means to say that general aggrandizement, in any way, is not allowed for anyone other than God—even if it is done through what

God has shown its grandeur with—then it is a claim for which there is no proof at all; rather definite proof is found against it.

Sometimes it is said that swearing by the right of the Prophet and God's friends, seeking nearness to them and hoping for their intercession in any way, is a worship and bestowal of an unseen authority on them. The same comments as above apply to this claim too: What do they mean by this "unseen authority"? Does it denote the independent authority, which is reserved for God? If so, then no Muslim (who believes in the Book of God) assigns it to other than God. And if it denotes non-material authority in general (even if it is by permission of God), then where is the proof that it is impossible for some chosen servants of God, like His friends, to have such authority by divine permission? The noble Qur'an has clearly mentioned many unseen authorities, as God says: ... *until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers* (*angels*) *cause him to die, ...* (6:61); *Say: "The angel of death will cause you to die ..."* (32:11); *By those* (*angels*) *who drag forth violently, and those who undo* (*the bonds*) *gently, and those who glide along* (*swiftly*)*; and those who go ahead with foremost speed, and those who manage the affairs* (79:1–5); *Say: "Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel, verily it is he who has brought it to your heart by Allah's command ..."* (2:97); and there are numerous verses of this theme.

And He says about Iblīs and his hosts: *for he and his tribe watch you from a position where you cannot see them. Verily We have made the Satans to be the guardians of those who do not believe* (7:27). Likewise, innumerable verses have been revealed about the prophets' and others' intercession in the next world, and their miraculous signs in this world.

I wish to understand the distinction these people make between material effects, which they readily accept in various contexts, and non-material effects, termed as unseen authority. If attributing effects to entities other than God is prohibited, then logically, there should be no disparity between material and non-material effects. Conversely, if such attribution is permissible with God's consent, then both types of effects should be regarded equally in this regard.

Examining Narrations

(5) ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm narrates through his people a *marfūʿ ḥadīth*: He says: "Tamīm al-Dārī, Ibn Bandī and Ibn Abī Māriyah went forth

on a journey. Tamīm al-Dārī was a Muslim and the other two were Christians. Tamīm al-Dārī had a box, which contained his merchandise together with a pot with golden design and a necklace; he had taken to sell it in an Arabian market.

"Then Tamīm al-Dārī became very sick. With the approach of death he gave all that he had to Ibn Bandī and Ibn Abī Māriyah, ordering them to convey it to his heirs. When they returned to Medina, they took out from the merchandise the pot and the necklace, handing over the rest to his heirs. The heirs found the two items missing. So, the family of Tamīm said to the two, 'Was our man sick for a long time in which he spent a lot of money?' They said, 'No. He was not sick but for a few days.' (The family) said, 'Then was he robbed of something in this journey?' They said, 'No.' (The family) said, 'Then did he do some trade in which he suffered a loss?' They said, 'No.' Then, the family said, 'But (here) we find missing the best things which he had, 'A pot with golden design ornamented with gems and a necklace.' They said, 'Whatever he gave to us we have given to you.'

"The family brought the two to the Messenger of God, and the Messenger of God asked them to take oath; they swore and the Messenger of God let them go free. Thereafter, that pot and necklace appeared with them, so the heirs of Tamīm came to the Messenger of God and said, 'O Messenger of God! Indeed, has appeared with Ibn Bandī and Ibn Abī Māriyah what we had claimed against them.' So, the Messenger of God waited for an order from God, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, about it.

"Then God, the Blessed, the Sublime, revealed: *O you who believe! Call to witness between you when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you, or two others from among others than you, if you are travelling in the land*—Thus, God, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, allowed witnessing of the People of the Book in will only when one is on journey and does not find Muslims; then He said:—*and the calamity of death befalls you; the two witnesses you should detain after the prayer; then if you doubt* (*them*)*, they shall both swear by Allah* (*saying*)*: 'We will not take for it a price, though there be a relative, and we will not hide the testimony of Allah, for then certainly we*

should be among the sinners.'—This is the first witnessing, which the Messenger of God had administered.—*Then if it becomes known that they both have been guilty of a sin*,—that is,they have perjured themselves;—*two others shall stand up in their place*—that is, from among the heirs of the deceased;—*from among those who have a claim against them,*—that is, against the first two;—*the two nearest in kin; so they two should swear by Allah*:—that is, they should swear in the name of God, that they (the two) have more right to this claim than them, and that they have perjured themselves in swearing by God;—'*Certainly our testimony is truer than the testimony of those two, and we have not exceeded the limit, for then most surely we should be of the unjust.'*

"So, the Messenger of God ordered the heirs of Tamīm al-Dārī to swear by God as he directed them; they did swear and the Messenger of God took the necklace and the pot from Ibn Bandī and Ibn Abī Māriyah, and returned them to the heirs of Tamīm al-Dārī.—*This is more proper in order that they should give testimony truly or fear that other oaths be given after their oaths.*" (*al-Kāfī*)

Author's comment: al-Qummī has likewise narrated it in his *al-Tafsīr*; but there is in it after the clause: *the two witnesses you should detain after the prayer*, the word, "that is, the afternoon prayer."

The word of the Imām: "*who have a claim against them*, against the first two": Apparently, it is in dual form, and if means the first two witnesses; it explains the Qur'anic word, "the first two." We have stated in the preceding commentary that it is the clearest of all probable meanings, according to this recital.

(6) al-Tirmidhī (who has said that it was a weak tradition), Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Naḥḥās (in his *al-Nāsikh*), Abu al-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh and Abū Nu'aym (in *al-Ma'rifah*) have narrated, through the chain of Abu al-Naḍr (and he is al-Kalbī), from Bādhān (*mawlā* of Umm Hānī), from Ibn 'Abbās, from Tamīm al-Dārī, that he said about this verse: "The people became clear of the two, except me and 'Udayy b. Badā'; and they were Christians frequenting to Syria before Islam. So, they came to Syria for their trade, and there came to them for trade *mawlā* of Banū Sahm, Badīl b. Abī Māriyah by name. He had a silver bowl, and it was his main merchandise. Then he became sick, and he appointed

them as his executor of the will and enjoined them to convey what he had left to his family." Tamīm said, "When he died, we took that bowl and sold it at a thousand dirham; then 'Udayy b. Badā' and I divided it among ourselves. When we came to his family, we gave to them what was with us; but they missed the bowl and they asked us about it; we said: 'He did not leave anything else nor did he give to us any other thing.'"

Tamīm said, "Thereafter, when I accepted Islam after arrival of the Messenger of God at Medina, I felt guilty about it; so I came to his family, gave them the information and paid to them five hundred dirham, and told them that a similar amount was with my companion. So, they brought him to the Messenger of God; he asked them for proof which they did not find; then he ordered them to adjure him by what is held sacred by his co-religionists, and he took oath. Then God revealed: *O you who believe! Call to witness between you* ... or fear that other oaths be given after their oaths. Then 'Amr b. al-'Āṣī and another man stood up and swore (to it); so five hundred dirhams were extracted from 'Udayy b. Badā'." (*al-Durru al-manthūr*)

Author's comment: Apart from its weakness, the tradition does not conform fully to the verse, and this non-conformity is clear. al-Suyūṭī has narrated from Ibn 'Abbās and 'Ikrimah what is near to the preceding tradition of al-Qummī.

(7) al-Fāriyābī, 'Abd b. Ḥamīd, Abū 'Ubayd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir and Abū al-Shaykh have narrated from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib that he recited *mina al-ladhī staḥaqqa* (with vowel *a* after *t*), (as is the common recitation.)

Ibn Marduwayh and al-Ḥākim (who has said it is correct) have narrated from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib that the Prophet recited: *al-ladhīna staḥaqqa 'alayhimu al-awlayān* (with *a* after *t*). (ibid.)

(8) Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: "This verse is abrogated." (ibid.)

Author's comment: There is no proof of abrogation as claimed here.

(9) Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl has narrated from al-Faḍl b. Shādhān, and 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm has narrated from his father, from Ibn Abī 'Umayr, from Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, from Abū 'Abdillāh that he said about the word of God: *or two others from among others than you*: If the

man is in a town where there is no Muslim, the witness of a non-Muslim is allowed in will. (*al-Kāfī*)

Author's comment: The tradition's meaning is inferred from the verse.

(10) (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad that he said, "I asked Abū ʿAbdillāh, about the word of God, to Whom belong Might and Majesty: *O you who believe! Call to witness between you when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you, or two others from among others than you.* He said, 'The two from among you means two Muslims; and those from among others than you, means (from) the People of the Book; and if they did not get from the People of the Book, then from the Magians, because the Messenger of God had followed about the Magians the system of the People of the Book regarding *jizyah*.

"'And it is (like this:) When a man dies in a place away from home and does not find two Muslims, he will call to witness two men from among the People of the Book; they will be detained after the afternoon prayer, and they both shall swear by God, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, (saying:) "*We will not take for it a price, though there be a relative, and we will not hide the testimony of Allah, for then certainly we should be among the sinners.*"' The (Imām) said: "'And it is when the heir of the deceased feels doubt about their (the two's) testimony, then it becomes known that they both have testified falsely, he has no right to refute their testimony until he brings two other witnesses; so they shall stand up in the place of the first two witnesses, *so they two should swear by Allah:* "*Certainly our testimony is truer than the testimony of those two, and we have not exceeded the limit, for then most surely we should be of the unjust.*" If he did so, the testimony of the first two would be set aside and that of these two would be allowed (that is, accepted). God says: *This is more proper in order that they should give testimony truly or fear that other oaths be given after their oaths.*'" (*ibid*.)

Author's comment: As you see, the tradition fits the earlier given explanation of the verse. There are other traditions of the same meaning in *al-Kāfī* and *al-Tafsīr* of al-ʿAyyāshī narrated from Abū ʿAbdillāh and Abu al-Ḥasan (peace be upon both.)

And in some traditions, the Divine Words: *or two others from among*

others than you, have been interpreted as, 'the unbelievers'; and it is more general than 'the People of the Book', as is narrated in *al-Kāfī* from Abu al-Ṣabāḥ al-Kinānī, from Abū 'Abdillāh, and in *al-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from Abū Usāmah from the same Imām about this verse: (I asked him:) "What (means): *or two others from among others than you*?" He said, "They are two unbelievers." "I said, '(What means:) *two just persons from among you*?' He said 'They are two Muslims.'"

Although the preceding tradition which confines it to the People of the Book is not capable of putting any restriction on this generality, according to the rules of generality and restriction because both are in positive case, yet the first tradition's context may explain the generality of the second one in a way that conforms with restriction.

(11) al-Ṣadūq has narrated through his chain to Abū Zayd 'Ayyāsh b. Yazīd b. al-Ḥasan from his father, Yazīd b. al-Ḥasan that he said: "Narrated to me Mūsa b. Ja'far (peace be upon both), he said: 'al-Ṣādiq, said about the words of God, to Whom belong Might and Majesty: On the day when God will assemble the messengers, then say:
"What answer were you given?" They shall say: "We have no knowledge."' He said: 'al-Ṣādiq, said, "They shall say, 'We have no knowledge through other than Thee.'"' He also said: 'al-Ṣādiq, said, "The Qur'an, all of it, is rebuke, and its interior is approximation."' (*Tafsīr al-Burhān*)
The author of *al-Burhān* says: "Ibn Bābawayh has said, 'The Imām means that behind the verses of rebuke and threat there are verses of mercy and forgiveness.'"

Author's comment: What he has quoted from al-Ṣadūq (may God have mercy upon him) regarding the meaning of the Imām's saying: 'The Qur'an, all of it, is rebuke, and its interior is approximation,' does not fit on it: Neither in view of the beginning of the tradition, because the interpretation of the messengers' word, 'We have no knowledge,' as, 'We have no knowledge through other than Thee', has no relation with the Qur'an containing two types of verses, those of promise and those of threat; nor in view of the context of the sentence itself, that is, 'The Qur'an, all of it, is rebuke, and its interior is approximation;' because this speech apparently means that the whole Qur'an is rebuke and the whole of it is approximation, and the matter differs from the point of view of interior and exterior;

it does not mean that the Qur'an is divided into two categories, one is of the verses of rebuke, and another besides it is the verses of approximation.

Pondering on the Imām's talk, we come to understand that 'rebuke', inasmuch as it stands parallel to 'approximation' means its concomitant, that is, to remove far as opposed to bring near; the Qur'an, all of it, is cognizance and reality; its exterior separates realities from one another and categorizes its parts, and its interior brings them nearer to each other, perfects them and unifies them. In short, it means that the Qur'an, in its exterior shows various realities of cognizance, which are separate one from the other, yet in spite of its numerousness and separateness of its components, in its interior its ingredients are quite near to each other, and its various meanings are interconnected, until it is unified and becomes one single reality, pervading the whole body like spirit—and it is nothing but the reality of oneness, monotheism. God says: *A Book whose verses are firmly arranged then separated, from the All-Wise, All-Aware* (11:1).

At this juncture, it becomes clear how it fits on what the Imām has said at the beginning of the tradition that the messengers' reply, 'We have no knowledge,' means: 'We have no knowledge through other than Thee.' It is because man, or any knower we suppose, knows whatever he knows through God; God is known through Himself, and all other things are known through Him. In other words, when knowledge connects with anything, it connects first of all with God, as deserves His sublime status and majesty, and then it connects through Him with that thing; because with Him is the knowledge of everything, He gives out of it to whomsoever He wishes from among His servants, as much as He wishes. God says: *... while they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except that which He wills; His throne extends over the heavens and the earth ...* (2:255). We have quoted earlier the narration of 'Abd al-A'lā mawlā Āl Sām from al-Ṣādiq and some other traditions in this regard.

Accordingly, the messengers' reply: '*We have no knowledge, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things,*' would mean in the light of the Imām's explanation, as follows: We have no knowledge of anything leaving Thee aside; we know whatever we know because of our knowledge about Thee; it is because all the knowledge belongs to Thee; and as such Thou knowest it better than us; after all, whatever we know comes out of Thine knowledge and Thou hast given us a part of it by Thine will and

Thine sustenance.

Accordingly, another meaning is understood of the words: *'surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things'*; and it is more sublime than the previously given explanation: Everything in this creation has an existence separate from the others' being. As such it is 'unseen' *vis-à-vis* the others, because its existence is limited and foreordained, it does not comprehend except what God wills it to comprehend; and God comprehends everything, and knows every unseen; thus nothing knows anything except through God, Sublime and Glorified is He from every shortcoming.

Now, we understand that division of the things into unseen and seen, actually means their division into an unseen which God wills that we should comprehend it and an unseen which He has kept hidden from us. Probably, this meaning is supported by the apparent meaning of the divine words: *He is the Knower of the unseen, and He does not reveal His unseen* (secrets) *to any one except to the messenger whom He chooses* (72:26–27), as is implied by relating the 'unseen' to the pronoun. You should deeply ponder on this matter.

(12) Yazīd al-Kanāsī narrates from Abū Ja'far, that he said about the verse: *On the day when Allah will assemble the messengers ...* " He will say, 'What answer were you given about your *awṣiyā'* (successors) whom you left behind in your *ummah*?' They will say: 'We have no knowledge of what they (the *ummah*) did after us.'" (*al-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

Author's comment: al-Qummī has narrated it in his *al-Tafsīr*, from Muḥammad b. Muslim from the same Imām.

(13) (al-Kulaynī) has narrated in *al-Kāfī* a tradition of similar theme, from Yazīd, from Abū 'Abdillāh, and it is based on the principle of the flow of meaning, or gives its interior explanation.

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Verses 110–111

These two and the subsequent verses (which narrate the story of the coming down of the Table and those which describe what God shall ask Jesus, son of Mary regarding the people's taking them as two gods besides God, and the reply which he will offer), all are related with the theme of the Chapter with which it had begun: It began with the call to fulfil the covenant and give thanks for favors, and cautioning against breaking the contract and being ungrateful to divine bounties. In this way, the end of the chapter fully returns to its beginning, and unity of intended theme are preserved.

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ
أَيَّدْتُكَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا ۖ وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَاةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ۖ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ
الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي ۖ وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ
بِإِذْنِي ۖ وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي ۖ وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْكَ إِذْ
جِئْتَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

(5:110) When Allah shall say: "O Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My favor on you and on your mother, when I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit, (so that) you spoke to the people in the cradle, and when grown up; and when I taught you the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Injīl; and when you made out of clay the figure of a bird by My leave, you breathed into it and it became a bird by My leave; and you healed those born blind and the lepers by My leave; and when you raised the dead by My leave; and when I held back the Children of Israel from you when you had come to them with clear signs, but then those of them who disbelieved said: 'This is nothing but clear sorcery'.

The verse counts many of the clear signs which had appeared on his hand, but it is counted in a way that shows God's grace on him and his mother together. These favors are mentioned in almost similar words in

the chapter of "The House of 'Imrān," where God narrates the angels' talk with Mary when they came to give her the good news of Jesus's birth. God says: *When the angels said: "O Mary! Surely God gives you good tidings of a Word from Him whose name is the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, And he shall speak to the people when in the cradle and when of mature age, And He will teach him the Book and the Wisdom, and the Torah and the Injīl. And* (*make him*) *a messenger to the Children of Israel. 'That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I create for you out of clay the likeness of a bird; then I breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by God's leave; and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring to life the dead, by God's leave* ... (3:45–49).

Meditation on the context of the verses makes it clear why the signs which apparently were exclusively connected with the Christ, have been counted as bounties bestowed on him and on his mother together, as the verses of the third chapter indicate; because good tiding is given concerning a bounty, and here the case is the same. Whatever signs and bounties were connected with Jesus, example, being born without a father, being strengthened by the Holy Ghost, creating flying birds, healing the blind and the leper and raising the dead to life by God's permission, were miraculous signs of Mary to the same degree as they were related to Jesus (peace be upon both). They both together were bestowed the divine favors, as God says: "remember My favor on you and your mother."

Also, the same is indicated by the divine words: ... *and We made her and her son a sign for all people* (21:91), as He has counted both of them together as one sign, not two.

The words: "*when I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit* (*so that*) *you spoke to the people*," apparently show that the strengthening with the Holy Spirit was the cause that enabled him to talk to the people. That is why the clause: "*you spoke to the people*," is attached to the preceding sentence without any intervening conjunction; it indicates that the strengthening and the speaking together constitute one action, made up of a cause and its effect. God on occasions has only mentioned one of the two—either cause or its effect as is seen in the preceding verses: ... *you spoke to the people in the cradle, and when grown up* ... (5:110); ... *and We gave to Jesus, son of Mary, clear evidence, and aided him with the Holy Spirit* (2:253).

Besides, if the reference to being strengthened with the Holy Spirit implies receiving revelations through the Spirit, this was not exclusive to Jesus, son

of Mary. All messengers shared this experience with him. Furthermore, the context of the verse does not support this interpretation.

The words: "*and when I taught you the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Injīl*." It may be inferred from it that Jesus received this knowledge at one go, through a single divine command, without any graduality. Also, it may be understood from the facts that all actions have been combined together and are governed by only one adverb of time, 'when'.

... and when you made out of clay the figure of a bird by My leave, ... and you healed those born blind and the lepers by My leave: The context, because the word 'when' is not repeated, shows that creating of the bird and healing of the blind and the lepers had happened at the same time; and mention of creation of bird contains the proviso: "by My leave," as the matter of creation is very important because it entails bestowal of life; that is why the Qur'an has paid special attention to this clause and mentions its being done by divine leave, although the divine leave is also mentioned at the end of the sentence. But the divine Book did not like keeping the hearers in suspense even for a few moments, lest they think for a few seconds that some one besides God can independently bestow life. And God knows better.

The words: "*and when you raised the dead by My leave*." Raising the dead alludes to making them alive. It clearly indicates that this miracle that had appeared on his hand, had involved those dead bodies, which were buried in graves, and he has put life into them and brought them out of the graves to this worldly life. The sentence shows that this miracle had taken place many times. Other themes connected with this verse were explained under the verses of the third chapter, and may be referred to if necessary.

... and when I held back the Children of Israel from you when you had come to them with clear signs, but then those of them who disbelieved said: 'This is nothing but clear sorcery': It shows that the Israelites wanted to harm him, but God held them back from it. It tallies with what God has mentioned in the chapter of "The House of 'Imrān," in his stories: *And they planned and Allah* (also) *planned, and Allah is the best of planners* (3:54)

وَإِذْ أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِي وَبِرَسُولِي قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَاشْهَدْ بِأَنَّنَا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١١١﴾

(5:111) And (recall) when I revealed to the disciples: 'Believe in Me and My messenger'; they said: 'We believe and bear witness that we are Muslims'"

It agrees with the third chapter's verse 52: *And when Jesus perceived their disbelief, he said: "Who will be my helpers unto Allah?" The disciples said: "We will be Allah's helpers: We believe in Allah; and bear witness that we are Muslims."*

It is clear from the above that the belief of the disciples, mentioned in this verse (*And when I revealed to the disciples: "Believe in Me and My messenger," they said: "We believe"*) is other than their first belief in Jesus; because the above verse 3:52 apparently shows that it had happened in later days of his Call, while the disciples (who answered it) were the foremost and the first in believing in him and had remained adhered to him.

Moreover, the verse 3:52 (*... he said: "Who will be my helpers unto Allah?" The disciples said: "We will be Allah's helpers: We believe in Allah; and bear witness that we are submitting ones."*), apparently shows that this Call was given to obtain their commitment for helping the divine religion, not for initial belief in God. That is why the verse ends on the words: "and bear witness that we are Muslims." The word, "Muslims," here indicates that they were ready to submit to the divine order by establishing God's Call and enduring the affliction in His cause. Obviously, this stage comes after the basic belief in God.

Now, it is clear that this verse relates the story of taking the covenant from the disciples.

There are some other themes related to this verse, which were given in the chapter of "The House of 'Imrān."

Examining Narrations

(1) (al-Ṣadūq) narrates through his chain from Abū Ya'qūb al-Baghdādī that he said, "Ibn al-Sikkīt said to Abu al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā, 'Why did God send Moses (b. 'Imrān) with his shining hand, staff and magical implements, and Jesus with medical implements, and Muḥammad, with speech and sermons?'

"Abu al-Ḥasan said, 'Verily, when God, the Sublime, sent Moses, magic was prevalent among the people of his time; so Moses brought to them from God, the Sublime, what they did not have and was

beyond their power to (bring) its like; with it he nullified their witchcraft and established through it the proof against them. And verily God, the Sublime, sent Jesus at a time when chronic diseases had spread and the people were in (dire) need of medicine; so he brought to them from God, the Sublime, like of which they did not have, and with which he gave life to the dead and healed the blind and the lepers by God's permission and established through it the proof against them. And verily God, the Sublime, sent Muḥammad at a time when lectures, talks and poetry were prevalent among the people of his time; so he brought to them the Book of God, sermons and wisdom with which he nullified their talk and established through it the proof against them.'

"Ibn al-Sikkīt said, 'I have not ever seen as you (are) today. Now, who is today the proof against the creatures?' He said, '(It is) reason, with it is recognized he who speaks the truth about God and it confirms him, and the liar against God, and it refutes him.' Ibn al-Sikkīt said, 'This is, by God, the reply.'" (*Ma'āni al-akhbār*)

(2) Muḥammad b. John narrates from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, from al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb, from Abū Jamīlah, from Abān b. Taghlib and others, from Abū ʿAbdillāh , that he was asked, "Had Jesus son of Mary raised anyone after his death (so that) he ate, got sustenance for a time and begot?" He said, "Yes. Verily, he had a friend, his brother in God, the Blessed, the Sublime; and Jesus used to pass by him and be his guest; and verily Jesus lost contact with him for sometime, then came to him to greet him; so his mother came out and he (Jesus) asked her about him; she said, 'He is dead, O Messenger of God!' So he said, 'Do you like to see him?' She said, 'Yes.' And he said, 'Tomorrow I shall come to you so that I raise him to life by the permission of God, the Sublime.'

"When the morning came, he came to her and said, 'Come with me to his grave.' They both proceeded until they reached his grave. So, Jesus stood there, then prayed to God, to Whom belong Might and Majesty. Then the grave opened wide and her son came out alive. When his mother saw him and he saw her, they both wept. Jesus had mercy on them, and told him (the son), 'Do you like to remain with your mother in the world?' He said, 'O Messenger of God! (Will it be) with eating, sustenance and a (fixed) period? Or without

eating, sustenance and a period?' Jesus said to him, 'With eating, sustenance and a period; you will live twenty years, will marry and beget.' He said, 'Then, yes.'"

(The Imām) said, "So Jesus, gave him to his mother; and he lived for twenty years and begot offspring." (*al-Kāfī*)

(3) Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Ṣan'ānī narrates from his father that he said, "I asked Abū Ja'far, about (the verse): *And when I revealed to the disciples*. He said, 'They were inspired.'" (*al-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

Author's comment: The word, revelation, has been used in the meaning of inspiration, in many places in the Qur'an. For example: *And We revealed to the mother of Moses: Suckle him ...* (28:7); *And your Lord revealed to the bee, saying: Make hives in mountains* (16:68); *that your Lord revealed to her* (that is, the Earth), (99:5).

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Verses 112–115

These verses narrate the story of the table sent down to Christ and his companions. While they do not explicitly state that God sent it down, the concluding verse implies a divine promise to do so, highlighting God's attribute of never breaking His promise.

The opinion held by some, suggesting that they sought forgiveness from Jesus upon hearing the threat of unprecedented punishment for disbelief after the table's arrival, lacks substantiation from either the Qur'an or credible *ḥadīth*.

This view has been attributed to several exegetes, including al-Mujāhid and al-Ḥasan, but their opinions alone do not constitute proof. Even if these views were based on traditions, they would have incomplete chains of narrators, rendering them weak and unreliable as proof. Additionally, these views are contradicted by other traditions that affirm the table's descent. Even if accurate, such isolated traditions are not typically relied upon outside of jurisprudence.

Occasionally, the argument is made that the table did not descend based on the fact that Christians are unaware of it, and it is not mentioned in their holy books. Proponents of this view argue that if the table had indeed been sent down, there would be numerous reasons for it to be documented in their scriptures and preserved as part of their societal memory, much like the Last Supper—referred to as the Eucharist—is remembered and celebrated.

However, anyone familiar with the history of Christianity, including its spread and the emergence of the Gospels, would likely dismiss such claims. This is because their texts were not consistently written and preserved with uninterrupted transmission (*tawātur*) from the time of Jesus. Moreover, contemporary Christianity does not directly connect back to him in a way that would validate the continuity of teachings received from one generation to the next, nor does it encompass the entirety of what is attributed to Christ's Call.

Certainly, some Gospels do recount the story of Jesus feeding his disciples and others with only a small quantity of bread and fish. However,

this narrative differs significantly in detail from the account presented in the Qur'an.

The Gospel According to St. John, in 6:1–15 says:

(1) After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias.
(2) And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that werediseased.
(3) And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.
(4) And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.
(5) When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?
(6) And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.
(7) Philip answered him, Two hundred penny worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.
(8) One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him.
(9) There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?
(10) And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.
(11) And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.
(12) When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.
(13) Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.
(14) Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.
(15) When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take

him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

Furthermore, upon reflecting on the Qur'anic rendition of this story, we encounter aspects that merit deeper thought. The initial request posed at the story's outset is devoid of the respect and decorum typically expected in addressing God. The narrative concludes with a stern warning from God, threatening those who choose disbelief after this event with a unique punishment, unlike any inflicted upon other nations. This aspect of the story is distinct from any divine sign granted to His prophets or any requests made by their followers, such as those in the stories of Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Shuayb, Moses and Muḥammad.

Could the stern response be due to the disciples' lack of decorum in their questioning, as their words seemingly expressed doubt about divine power? However, when we examine the demands of previous nations, we find instances of blatant disrespect towards the majesty of their Lord and mockery of their prophets. Additionally, the arrogance displayed by the contemporaries of the Prophet and the Jews of that era, as depicted in the Quran, appears even more impertinent and offensive.

Or was the severity of the warning due to the fact that the disciples, who were believers prior to this event, lapsed into disbelief after witnessing the table's descent and observing clear signs, thus warranting such a grave threat? Although turning to disbelief after witnessing clear signs is indeed a significant transgression, this reaction was not unique to them. Similar instances occurred in other nations, yet they were not subjected to such stern warnings. This includes even those who, having been granted proximity to the divine, later apostatized—a situation described in the Qur'an: *And recite to them the narrative of him to whom We gave Our signs, but he withdrew himself from them, so the Satan overtook him, so he became of those who go astray* (7:175).

What may be said at this juncture is that this story, which began with a question, is distinguished with a theme that is unique among all miracles of the prophets, which they had brought because of their people's suggestion, or some other necessary requirements.

The miraculous signs narrated by the Divine Book were of various types: There were the miracles which God gave to the prophets when He sent them to the people, in order that it should serve as the proof to

support their claims of prophethood or messengership, as Moses was given the bright hand and staff; and Jesus was enabled to raise the dead to life, create the bird and heal the blind and the lepers; and Muḥammad was given the Qur'an. These signs were given, as they were needed for the Call to the true belief and for completing the proof against the disbelievers, so *that he who would perish might perish by clear proof, and he who would live might live by clear proof;* ...(8:42).

There were the miracles brought by the prophets and the messengers as a result of the disbelievers' suggestions, like the she-camel of Ṣāliḥ; in the same category come the dreadful happenings and tormenting chastisements which appeared in the course of the prophetic Calls, like the signs of Moses against the people of Pharash (locust, lice, frogs, etc. totalling seven signs), flood of Noah, earthquake of Thamūd, storm of ʻĀd and similar things. These too were the signs connected to the disbelieving enemies.

There were the signs shown by God to the believers for fulfilling their needs, like gushing forth of streams from rocks, coming down of manna and quails for the Israelites in the wilderness, raising of the mountain over their heads and opening up the river to save them from Pharaoh and his deeds. These were the signs, which appeared either to frighten the sinners and the arrogant or to show the dignity of the believers in order that the word of the Beneficent Lord is completed about them—without any suggestion put by them.

Of the same category are the promises given by God in His Book to the believers for manifesting the honor of His Messenger, example, the promise of the conquest of Mecca, and of victory of the Romans in a few years, etc.

These are the categories of the signs narrated in the Qur'an and described in divine teachings. But as for suggesting a sign after coming down of a sign, it is a fantasy which the divine teaching counts as nonsense that should not be paid attention to: For example, the proposal of the People of the Book that the Prophet should bring for them a book from the heavens, while the Qur'an was present before their eyes. God says: *The People of the Book ask you to bring down to them a book from heaven; so indeed they had demanded of Moses a greater thing than that, for they said: "Show us Allah manifestly"; ... But Allah bears witness by what He has revealed to you that He has revealed it with His knowledge; and the angels bear witness* (*also*)*; and sufficient is Allah for a witness* (4:153; 166).

Likewise, the polytheists had asked the Prophet that he should bring down the angels or should show God to them. God says: *And those who do not hope for Our meeting say: "Why not have angels been sent down upon us, or* (*why*) *do we not see our Lord?" Now certainly they are too proud of themselves and have revolted in great revolt* (25:21). Also, He says: *And they say: "What is the matter with this Messenger that he eats food and goes about in the markets? Why has not an angel been sent down to him, so that he should have been a warner with him? Or* (*why is not*) *a treasure sent down to him, or he is made to have a garden from which he should eat?" And the unjust say: "You do not follow any but a man enchanted." See what likeness do they apply to you, so they have gone astray; therefore they shall not be able to find a way* (25:7–9). There are many verses of the same theme.

It is only because the purpose of coming down of a sign or verse is manifestation of truth and completion of proof; when it came down then indeed the truth became manifest and the proof was complete. Now, there is no sense in asking for coming down of a sign as it has already happened and the purpose achieved, and therefore such asking would only mean mockery of divine signs, playing with the Lord's majesty and wavering in acceptance of reality; and it is the greatest arrogance and haughtiness.

Such behavior, when exhibited by believers, signifies a more severe offense and a greater sin. Why would a believer request a heavenly sign when they already possess faith, particularly if they are among those who have witnessed divine signs and believed thereafter? Isn't this akin to the requests made by people indulging in luxury, at gatherings of entertainment and assemblies of amusement, who challenge magicians and illusionists to display their most astonishing tricks and remarkable feats?

What appears from the words: *When the disciples said: "O Jesus son of Mary! Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?"* that they had asked the Christ to show them a sign which would be reserved for them; they were his disciples, attached to him; and they had seen those clear signs and manifest miracles; because he was not sent to his people except with miraculous signs, as is seen from the divine words: "*And a messenger to the Children of Israel: 'That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I create for you out of clay the likeness of a bird; then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allah's leave; and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring to life the dead, by Allah's leave'*" (3:49).

And how can it be imagined about him who believed in Christ that he would not have seen any sign from him, while he in his own existence was a sign: God created him without a father, and strengthened him with the Holy Ghost, and he talked with the people in the cradle as well as in matured age; and he continued to be honored by one sign after another until God raised him to Himself and ended his affairs with a wonderful sign.

When they asked to be shown a sign which they had chosen for themselves—even after seeing all those numerous sign—it was tantamount to suggesting a sign after a sign; thus they committed a great offence, and that is why Jesus admonished them, saying: "*Fear Allah if you are believers.*"

And it was because of the same reason that they reinterpreted their suggestion and explained it again in such a way as to tone down the vehemence of their speech and blunt its edge; so they said: "*We desire that we should eat of it and that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know that you have indeed spoken the truth to us and that we may be of the witnesses to it.*" Thus they added to eating from it other reasons to explain their suggestion. They wanted to show that this suggestion was not like amusement with wondrous activities or playing with divine signs; rather there are some benefits intended, like perfection of their knowledge and removal of wrong ideas from their hearts and their being the witnesses to it.

Yet they did not omit mentioning the intention of eating from it, and that was the main offence. If they had said: 'We desire that we should eat of it so that our hearts should be at rest,' there would not have been any blame on them; but they said: "*... eat of it and that our hearts should be at rest.*" The former sentence cuts at the roots of all fantasy and foolhardiness, but not the latter (that is, present construction).

When they insisted, Jesus agreed to their demand and asked his Lord to honor them in this way; and it was the only sign sent down to them on their suggestion in an apparently unimperative matter, and that is the believers' partaking of it. That is why he presented it in a manner suitable to be addressed to the Divine Majesty, so he said: "*O Allah, our Lord! Send down to us food from heaven which should be an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us.*" Thus he dressed it in the robe of festivity; feast for a people is the day in which they get a gift or an item of pride, which is exclusively reserved, to them from among the people, and the

coming down of the table has this particular attribute.

When Jesus asked of his Lord what he asked—and far be it from him to ask for anything except what he hoped that it would be accepted, and that his Lord would not disgrace him by rejecting it; and far be it from his Lord to turn him away without accepting his invocation—his Lord accepted his prayer, but with one proviso, that whoever among his people would disbelieve afterwards, God would chastise him with a chastisement that would be exclusively reserved to them, as the sign that would be given to them would be exclusively reserved to them; that is why He said: "*Surely I will send it down to you, but whoever shall disbelieve afterwards from among you, surely I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise any one among the nations.*" Ponder on it.

إِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ۖ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾

(5:112) When the disciples said: "O Jesus son of Mary! Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?" He said: "Fear Allah if you are believers."

'When' is an adverb, related to an implied verb, Remember, or some similar word.

Someone has said that it is related to the words in the preceding verse, they said: "*We believe in Allah; and bear witness that we are submitting ones*." It means: The disciples said: "We believe and bear witness that we submit," at the time when they said to Jesus: "Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?" It shows that they were not truthful in their claim, nor were they serious in asking Jesus, to bear witness that they were submitters.

Comment: This interpretation goes against the context. How could their belief be impure, when God Himself had revealed to them to believe in Him and His Messenger? And when God counts it as His favor to Jesus. Apart from that, if this verse was joined to the preceding one, it should have brought a pronoun and not said: "When the disciples said."

Regarding the term *al-Māidah* (plate, when it contains food), al-Rāghib has said: "*al-Māidah* is the plate that contains food; and both (plate and food) are separately called *māidah*; and it is said: '*Mādanī*

yumīdunī', that is, 'He fed me.'"

The wording of their question, that is, "*Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?*" according to its apparent meaning that comes to the mind, is such that the reason thinks it difficult that it could have been uttered by the disciples, who were companions of the Christ, and his confidants who adhered to him, were illuminated by the light of his knowledge and cognizance, and followed in his footsteps; and belief and faith—even in its lowest rank, makes man aware that God has power over everything, He cannot be overcome and no disability reaches Him. So, how was it possible for them to ask their messenger whether his Lord was able to send down to them food from heaven?

That is why al-Kasā'ī, one of the seven reciters, has recited this verse as: *hal tastaṭī'u* (second person singular) *rabbaka* (as an object); that is, 'Are you able (to ask) your Lord?' Thus, implying the verb, which we have put in the brackets.

The exegetes have given different interpretations of this question, while most of them agree that it means other than what comes to the mind that they entertained doubt about the power of God—because they were far above such absurd ignorance.

The best possible interpretation is to say that ability in this verse is an allusion to demand of the underlying reason and occurrence of permission; in the same way as possibility, power and ability are used metaphorically in this very meaning. For example, it is said: 'The King cannot listen to every needy person;' it means that the King's underlying reason prevents him from it; otherwise, listening to is within his ability. Or as it is said: 'A rich man cannot give to everyone who asks,' that is, the reason of protecting the wealth does not demand it. Or as it is said: 'A knowledgeable person cannot disseminate all that he knows,' that is, stops him from it the welfare of religion, or welfare of the people, or the system that is prevalent among them. Or as one says to his companion: 'Can you come with me to visit Mr. X?' The question implies: 'Does it agree with your welfare and wisdom?' It does not imply his ability to go there. Think over it.

There are some other explanations given by the exegetes:

One: The disciples had asked this question in order to acquire tranquillity through the belief resulting from observation; it was not because they were having any doubt regarding God's power. In a way, it is the same mode

as God quotes in the story of Abraham that he said: "*My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead.*" *He said:* "*What! And do you not believe?*" *He said:* "*Yes, but that my heart may be at ease.*" ... (2:260).

Comment: Although there is nothing wrong in asking for a sign for increase in belief and tranquillity of heart, but there is no reason to take their question in this meaning; and their sinlessness is not proved, like Abraham so that it could be an independent proof for interpreting their talk in a way free from rancor. Rather the proof is against it, because they had not said: 'We desire that we should eat of it in order that our hearts should be at ease' (as Abraham had said, *'Yes, but that my heart may be at ease'*). Rather they had said, 'We desire that we should eat of it and that our hearts may be at ease;' thus they had counted the eating, *per se*, a purpose.

Moreover, this interpretation takes it for granted that their hearts were clean of any shade of doubt regarding the divine power. And the ugliness of the apparent meaning of their talk remains in its place.

Apart from that, it had been explained under the verse 2:260: And when Abraham said: "*My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead.*" ..., that he did not want to see the dead getting life after death. (The interpretation under Comment is based on this idea.) Because that would have meant asking for a sign after clear observation, as he was at that time talking with his Lord "face to face." What he had asked for was to see 'how' the dead would be raised—in the afore-mentioned meaning.

Two: They actually wanted to ask about the action, not about God's power to do so; they expressed the idea metaphorically through its concomitant.

Comment: There is no proof for this explanation. Even if we accept it, it would negate the idea that they were ignorant of all-encompassing divine power; but the unsuitability of their talk to manners of servitude still remains in place.

Three: There is in this speech an implied word, which is omitted. The complete sentence is as follows: 'Are you able to ask your Lord to send down to us food from heaven?' This meaning is supported by the recital: 'Are you able (to ask) your Lord,' that is, 'Are you able to ask Him without there being anyone to dissuade you from it.'

Comment: This supposed omission and implication cannot turn

the words: 'Is your Lord able to ...' into, 'Are you able to ask your Lord;' because the verbs differ in the two recitals—in the verse it is third person singular, while in the implied one it is second person singular; and omission or implication does not change the third person to the second person at all.

However, if such change over be necessary, then it would be said as follows: It ascribes the action of Jesus to his Lord, because his action is in reality God's action, or because everything attributed to him belongs to God. But to begin with this explanation is wrong because only those actions of prophets and messengers are attributed to God which do not bring any defect or shortcoming to His majesty, example, guidance, knowledge and things like that. On the other hand, when it comes to the concomitants of their humility and humanity, like lack of power and neediness or eating and drinking, etc., their attribution to Him cannot be justified at all. Apart from that, the difficulty of the apparent meaning of the words remains in its place.

Four: *al-Istiṭāʿah* (ability) is used here in the meaning of *al-iṭāʿah* (obedience); and the question means: 'Will your Lord obey you and accept your prayer if you asked Him for it.'

Comment: It is like jumping out from the frying pan into the fire. Obviously, the question whether God would obey His messenger is more hideous and repulsive than the query about His capability.

Someone has supported this explanation as follows: *al-Istiṭāʿah* and *al-iṭāʿah* both are derived from the root *ṭ-w-ʿ* (obedience) which is opposite of *kurh* (dislike); thus obeying an order means doing it with pleasure and free will; the paradigm of *al-istifʿāl* from this stem is like that of this paradigm from the stem (*jawb*). In other words, as *istijābah* gives the meaning of *ijābah* (to accept prayer), likewise *istiṭāʿah* indicates *iṭāʿah*; thus *istaṭāʿahu* means *aṭāʿahu* ('he obeyed him'). And 's' and 't' in both verbal nouns denote their most well known theme, and that is 'to want something'; however it is related to an implied verb which is indicated by the described verb that emanates from the omitted one; 'he is capable of doing this thing' means as follows: 'He wanted it and intended that this thing should obey him, and so it obeyed him and followed his order'; likewise he answered Zayd means: 'Zayd asked for something and wanted it to accept his call, so it answered it'.

He further says: With this fine explanation we may understand the

correctness of those exegetes' opinion who have said that "Is your Lord able" here means "Will your Lord obey," that is, Will He do this work by His own free will and pleasure, without any compulsion? In short, it means that: Will your Lord be pleased to send down to us food from heaven, when we ask Him, or when you ask it from Him on our behalf?

Comments:

First: All that he has done is to correlate *istaṭā'a* with *istajābah*, and give to the former the later's meaning. But using analogy in language is not allowed.

Second: That both *istiṭā'ah* and *iṭā'ah* are derived from *ṭaw'* which is opposite of *kurh* (dislike), does not necessarily mean that the stem's meaning will be preserved in all conjugational changes; because there are many basic words which have left their original meaning as a result of the changes in conjugation, for example: *dharaba* (he hit) and *adhraba* (he went on strike); *qabila* (he accepted), *aqbala* (he came forward), *qabbala* (he kissed), *qābala* (he encountered) *istaqbala* (he welcomed).

When the grammarians look at the basic stem of the verb while seeing its conjugational changes, their only aim is to find out how much of the basic meaning is sustained in all these changes; or does that meaning give way to another new one; they do not think that the original meaning should be preserved, even with all those changes. Understand it.

A word indicates the meaning that is understood from it by the live and prevalent usage, not by the literal connotation of its root word. The word: *istiṭā'ah* has been used in more than forty places in the Divine Book, and everywhere it gives the meaning of ability. And the word: *aṭā'ah* is used in nearly seventy places, and everywhere it gives the meaning of obedience. Also, wherever the word: *ṭaw'* has been used it denotes 'opposite of dislike'. Now, how can the word: *istiṭā'a* be taken to mean *iṭā'a*, and this in its turn be taken to mean *ṭaw'*? And how can it be then claimed that ability here means pleasure or liking?

As for *ajāba* and *istajāba*, both have been used in the Qur'an in the same meaning; and *istajābah* has been used several times more than *ajābah*—the former is found in about thirty places while the latter is not seen in more than ten. How can *aṭā'a* and *istaṭā'a* can be analogized with it?

As for the both words having the same meaning, it only means that two aspects of theses words fit on one place: *Ajāba* means that the answer

went over from the answerable to the questioner, and *istajāba* means that the one who is answerable asked for the reply from himself and passed it on to the questioner.

It is now clear that what that exegete has explained *istajābah* with, is not correct; he has said: "*Istajāba* means that he asked for something and wanted it to give him the reply and it replied." But the paradigm of *istif'āl* indicates demand of *fa'ala*, and not demand of *af'ala*. And it is clear.

Third: The context does not agree with this interpretation. If we accept that their question, "Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?" only meant: 'Will your Lord be pleased that we ask Him (or you ask Him) to send down to us food from heaven?' and that their only aim from this question or from this coming down was that their faith be strengthened and their hearts be at ease, then why Jesus should admonish them and say: "Fear God if you are believers?" And why should God threaten him who would disbelieve afterwards from among them with a chastisement with which He would not chastise any one in the worlds? While the fact remains that they had not spoken except truth and had not put except a proper request; and God Himself has said: ... *and ask Allah of His grace;* ... (4:32)

Commentary continues:

He said: "Fear Allah if you are believers": This admonition by Jesus came in response to their apparent questioning of his Lord's ability to send down food from heaven, a query that inherently casts doubt. However, considering our interpretation, the true basis for this censure, culminating in severe threats, was their request for a sign when none was needed. Their suggestion seemed akin to trivializing divine signs. Additionally, the crude manner of their question suggested a lack of firm belief in God's power. In this context, the reason for Jesus's admonition becomes clearer.

قَالُوا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَأْكُلَ مِنْهَا وَتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُنَا وَنَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ صَدَقْتَنَا وَنَكُونَ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾

(5:113) They said: "We desire that we should eat of it and that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know that you have indeed spoken the truth to us and that we may be of the witnesses to it."

It appears from the context that they offered this excuse in order to

save themselves from his censure. This talk apparently is related to their demand for a sign by sending down the food; it does not refer to any imagined doubt that they would have entertained regarding God's unrestricted power. This is another evidence that they were so admonished because they had asked for a sign when it was not needed at all.

As for their words: "*We desire that we should eat of it ... we may be of the witnesses to it.*" The disciples have given four reasons for demanding this particular sign:

First: Eating of it: They wanted to point out that they had not intended playing with the signs of God; they wanted to eat of it, and it was a reasonable objective. We have said earlier that this explanation of the disciples was tantamount to their acceptance that they deserved the admonition by Jesus and the severe threatening by God to him who would disbelieve in the sign of the food.

Someone has said that they had mentioned eating in order to show their utmost need of food and that they could not find anything to satisfy their hunger.

Yet others have said that they meant to say: that we should be blessed by eating it.

However, you are aware that neither of the above reasons can be inferred from merely the word, eating. Had they intended either of the two reasons, which would really remove the censure, it was necessary for them to mention it clearly. As they did not mention any such thing in spite of its necessity in this context, obviously they had used eating in its general sense, inasmuch as it was a reasonable purpose, and it was one part of their objective in suggesting the coming down of the food.

Second: Tranquillity of hearts, that their hearts should be at rest, by the removal of notions, which were inconsistent with sincerity and presence.

Third: To recognize that Jesus had indeed truthfully conveyed God's message. Here, 'knowledge' refers to the certainty that settles in one's heart once it is free from devilish doubts and insinuations.

Alternatively, as some have suggested, this 'knowledge' could refer to the truth in Jesus's promises regarding the outcomes of faith, such as the fulfillment of prayers.

However, this interpretation seems less likely. The disciples requested the food to come down specifically through Jesus's prayer, as a miracle

from him. They had already witnessed numerous signs and miracles performed by Jesus, who was consistently accompanied by significant divine signs. He had engaged with his community only with his Lord's signs, so they were accustomed to seeing the fruits of his faith manifested through the acceptance of his prayers. If 'fruit' refers to the acceptance of Jesus's prayers, then it aligns. But if it means acceptance of the disciples' prayers, it contradicts the context, as they had not sought the sign through their own prayers; it descended solely due to Jesus's invocation.

Fourth: Their request aimed to enable them to bear witness to this event, serving as evidence both in confrontations with disbelievers and before God on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, the concept of 'witnessing' here is broad and unrestricted. It might also specifically pertain to bearing witness before God, as suggested in their statement recorded in the Qur'an: "*Our Lord! We believe in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the Messenger, so write us down with those who bear witness*" (3:53).

In essence, while justifying their request, they introduced appealing factors to their primary goal of experiencing heavenly food. This was an attempt to mitigate the seeming inappropriateness of asking for a sign after having already witnessed numerous signs. Ultimately, Jesus consented to their request, following their persistent appeal.

قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوَّلِنَا وَآخِرِنَا وَآيَةً مِنْكَ ۖ وَارْزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

(5:114) Jesus the son of Mary said: "O Allah, our Lord! Send down to us food from heaven which should be to us an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us, and a sign from Thee, and grant us sustenance, and Thou art the best of providers."

He joined his own self with them in asking for the food; and began by calling to his Lord with a comprehensive word: "O God, our Lord!" They had said: "*Is your Lord able ...*," but he changed it so that the address would agree with the prayer.

This prayer is unique amongst all the prayers and invocations of the prophets (peace be upon them), quoted in the Qur'an. While all others begin with the word: 'My Lord' or 'Our Lord'; this alone begins with: "O God, our Lord!" It is only because of the delicacy of the situation and the

fright of appraisal. On the other hand, similar opening addresses are found in the various types of praises quoted in the Qur'an: *Say:* "*Praise be to Allah ...*" (27:59); *Say:* "*O Allah, Master of Kingdom! ...*" (3:26); *Say:* "*O Allah! Originator of the heavens and the earth, ...*" (39:46).

Then he presented a rationale for the request to send down this food, suggesting it should serve as a source of continuous joy for him and his followers. The disciples, in their initial request, hadn't specified the desire for it to be an exclusive celebration for themselves. Instead, he framed the request in a more inclusive and positive manner. This approach was likely to prevent any perception of it merely being a demand for a sign in light of the numerous significant divine signs already witnessed. By reframing the request in this way, it became more palatable and in harmony with divine approval, avoiding any conflict with God's majesty and greatness. Festivals, by their very nature, foster unity, rejuvenate communities, bring joy to participants, and are typically celebrated to mark the return of religious grandeur.

That is why he said: "*an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us*," that is, the first group of our nation and the other ones who would join them later—as the context shows. Because *ʿīd* (festival) is derived from *ʿawd* (return); so it would be *ʿīd* only if it returns time and again, in descendants after ancestors without any limit.

This festival exclusively belonged to the *ummah* of Jesus, and as explained earlier, this type of sign too was reserved for them.

... and a sign from Thee: First he puts up the question of *ʿīd*, and it was a good and beautiful thing free from all blemish; then he followed it by its being a sign from God. It was an extra benefit added to the main objective; it was not intended to be the only objective. Had it been the only purpose, that is, its being a sign asking for, it would have led to an unwanted result; because all good advantages which could be intended from it, were easily obtainable through the signs which the disciples and others were seeing from him every day.

... and grant us sustenance, and Thou art the best of providers: It is another benefit which he counted as resulting from that invocation of *ʿīd*, although it is not the intended purpose. The disciples had asked for it as the main intended purpose in itself, as they had said: "*We desire that we should eat of it* " Thus, they had mentioned it as the thing intended for

itself, and mentioned it before other items. But Jesus counted it as unintended for itself and put it at the end; also, he changed the word, eating, with that of sustenance, and added after it the phrase: "'and Thou art the best of providers.'"

What they had treated as the main purpose, has been relegated by Jesus as a resulting benefit, only. Its proof may be seen in the fact that he first prayed for himself and his whole *ummah* the granting of *ʿīd*, which he had added to their suggestion. In this way, its becoming a sign of God and a sustenance, became two attributes which were reserved to some of them excluding the others, like a resulting benefit which is not all-encompassing.

Upon observing the exemplary and impressive etiquette displayed by Jesus towards his Lord, you will find it astonishing. Notice how he skillfully handled the wording of their request, enhancing and refining it, omitting certain parts, rearranging others, and modifying and preserving it. In doing so, he transformed their initial request, which was entirely unsuitable for presentation before God, into a beautifully crafted speech embodying the essence of devout servitude. Reflect deeply on the nuances of his speech, and you will be truly amazed.

قَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مُنَزِّلُهَا عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بَعْدُ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنِّي أُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا لَا أُعَذِّبُهُ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

(5:115) Allah said: "Surely I will send it down to you, but whoever shall disbelieve afterwards from among you, surely I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise any one among the nations."

The people of Medina and Syria as well as ʿĀṣim have recited it, *munazziluhā* with intensified pronunciation, and the others have recited *munziluha* without intensification—as has been described in *Majmaʿ al-bayān*. And the latter is more appropriate, because *inzāl*—from which *munziluhā* is derived—denotes being sent down all at once, and the food was sent down in this very manner. As for *tanzīl*—from which *munazziluhā* is derived—it is generally used for gradual coming down, as described earlier repeatedly.

The phrase "*Surely I will send it down to you*" represents a clear promise of the food's descent. This is particularly evident when examining its

linguistic structure. The original phrase translates to "I am its sender down," utilizing the *nomen agentis* form rather than a verb. This construction unequivocally indicates that the food was indeed sent down to them.

Some exegetes have said that it was not sent down, as is quoted in *al-Durr al-manthūr* and *Majmaʿ al-bayān*, from al-Ḥasan and Mujāhid that they said: "It did not come down; because when they heard of the condition they abandoned their request and said: 'We do not want it nor do we need it'; so it did not come down."

But the verse in question definitively indicates that the food was indeed sent down. It contains a clear promise of its descent, and it is inconceivable that God would make such a forthright promise while knowing that the request would be withdrawn, preventing the food's descent. The promise in the verse is explicit, and the subsequent condition specifies that anyone who disbelieves after the food's descent would face an unparalleled punishment. In essence, the verse presents an unconditional promise to send down the food, with the punishment for disbelief attached as a separate clause. It does not suggest that the food's descent was contingent on accepting the punishment for disbelief, such that the promise would be nullified if this condition was not accepted. Consequently, the food's descent wouldn't be hindered even if they retracted their request. This is an important point to grasp.

In this scenario, the divine promise to send down the food, coupled with the severe threat of punishment for disbelievers, does not signify a rejection of Jesus's prayer. On the contrary, it appears to affirm his supplication. However, within this context, accepting the prayer could have implied that the sign would be an unbounded mercy, benefiting everyone from the first to the last. To address this, God introduced a specific condition. In essence, the text indicates that this festival, though exclusively reserved for them, would not be universally advantageous. It would be beneficial solely for the believers among them who maintained their faith. Conversely, for the disbelievers, this event would bring significant harm.

Thus, these two verses in their style are like the verses 2:124 and 7:155–6. All these verses contain a general and unrestricted prayer and a restricted acceptance. (Those verses are as follows.)

And (*remember*) *when his Lord tried Abraham with certain words, and he fulfilled them. He said: "Surely I am going to make you an Imām for men." He* (*Abraham*) *said: "And of my offspring?" He said: "My covenant*

shall not include the unjust." (2:124).

"*Thou art our Guardian, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us, and Thou art the best of the forgivers. And ordain for us good in this world and in the hereafter, for surely we proceed to Thee.*" *He said:* "(*As for*) *My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, and My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it for those who fear Allah and pay the zakāt, and those who believe in Our signs.*" (7:155–6).

From the preceding discussion, it becomes clear that the reason for the specific chastisement threatened (which would be exclusive to them) stems from their request for a sign unique to them, not shared with any other nation. Consequently, when this request was fulfilled, they were warned that should they disbelieve in it, they would face a punishment equally unique and exclusive, mirroring the distinct privilege they had been granted.

This context makes it evident that '*al-ʿālamīn*' (worlds or nations) encompasses all nations and is not limited to those existing during the time of Jesus. The term is connected to those who were distinguished among the people and therefore extends to all nations, not merely those present on Earth during Jesus's era.

Additionally, it's evident that while the sentence, "*surely I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise any one among the nations*," conveys a stern threat of severe punishment, it does not imply that this chastisement would surpass all other punishments in terms of severity or agony. Rather, it indicates that the punishment would be distinct, exclusively afflicting them among all the nations.

Examining Narrations

(1) Abū ʿAbdillāh explained the phrase: "*Is your Lord able*" in these words, "Are you able to pray to your Lord?" (*Majmaʿu al-bayān*)

Author's comment: This meaning has been narrated through Sunnī chains from some companions and their followers, like ʿĀishah and Saʿīd b. Jubayr. It returns to the meaning which we have shown earlier, because the query about Jesus's power can only be correct if it refers to his ability from the view of reason and welfare, not about his actual power.

(2) ʿĪsā al-ʿAlawī narrates from his father from Abū Jaʿfar that he said, "The table (of food) that was sent to the Children of Israel was suspended by golden chains; there were nine fish and nine loaves of bread on it." (*al-Tafsīr*, al-ʿAyyāshī)

Author's comment: In another version there is nine *anwān* (plural of *nūn*) in place of *aḥwatah* (plural of *ḥūt*); both have the same meaning, fish.

(3) ʿAmmār b. Yāsir narrates from the Prophet that he said, "The table came (with) bread and meat. It was because they had asked Jesus for an inexhaustible food which they would eat. He (The Prophet) said, 'It was said to them, "Surely it will stay with you as long as you do not act treacherously, do not hide it and do not lift from it; but if you did so you will be punished."' He (The Prophet) said, 'But the day did not come to its end until they hid it, lifted from it and acted treacherously.'" (*Majmaʿ al-bayān*)

Author's comment: (al-Suyūṭī) has narrated it in *al-Durru al-manthūr* from al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn al-Anbārī, Abu al-Shaykh and Ibn Marduwayh, from Ammār b. Yāsir from the Prophet, and there is at its end the phrase: "so they were transformed into apes and swine."

(4) Also, he writes in the same *al-Durru al-manthūr*: Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated a similar tradition in another way from ʿAmmār b. Yāsir as a *mawqūf* tradition. al-Tirmidhī has said that the *waqf* is more correct.

Author's comment: What this report says that they had asked for an inexhaustible food which they would eat, does not fully agree with the verse, as appears from their words quoted herein, and that we may be of the witnesses to it, because a food that is never exhausted does not need any witness to testify for it—except if it means testifying before God on the Day of Resurrection.

Also, the report of their transformation into apes and swines, as what is apparent from the context, is the punishment with which they were threatened. But here it leaves open another door of argument. Because the divine words: "*surely I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise any one among the nations*," apparently show that they would be meted out with an exclusive punishment, not shared by any others; while the Qur'an clearly mentions that other people too were transformed into apes. God says: "*Be apes, despised and hated.*" (2:65). And it is narrated in this connection through some chains of Ahl al-Bayt, that they were transformed into swines.

(5) al-Fuḍayl b. Yasār narrates from Abu al-Ḥasan that he heard him saying, "Swines were from the people of Jesus, they had asked for coming down of the table and then did not believe, so God

transformed them into swines." (*al-Tafsīr, al-ʿAyyāshī*)

(6) ʿAbdu al-Ṣamad b. Bandār said, "I heard Abu al-Ḥasan saying, 'Swines were a community of bleachers, they denied the table, so they were transformed into swines.'" (ibid.)

Author's comment: It is narrated in *al-Kāfī* from Muḥammad b. John, from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, from Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī from Abu al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā that he said, "Elephant is transformed, it was a fornicating king; wolf is transformed, it was a cuckold Bedouin; rabbit is transformed, it was a woman who was disloyal to her husband and did not take bath after her menstruation; bat is transformed, it used to steal dates of the people; apes and swines are groups of the Children of Israel who had exceeded the limits of the Sabbath; eel and lizard were a group of the Children of Israel who did not believe when the table was sent down to Jesus son of Mary, so they became disoriented, one group fell in the sea and another in the land; mouse is a debaucher; scorpion was a slanderer; and bear, lizard and wasp were meat-sellers who defrauded in measure."

This tradition does not go against the preceding two traditions, because it is possible that some of them were changed into swines, while some others were changed into eel and lizard. However, it is not free from another difficulty, as it mentions that the people of the Sabbath were changed into apes and swines, while this verse as well as a similar one in the chapter seven, mention, only their transformation into apes, and their context rejects their transformation into any other shape.

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Verses 116–120

This passage presents a dialogue between God and His messenger, Jesus son of Mary, concerning the Christian claims about Jesus. The verses aim to reaffirm Jesus's own declarations about his role and identity during his earthly life. They emphasize that Jesus never claimed any rights or statuses that were not granted to him; he was constantly under the vigilant watch of God, who neither sleeps nor deviates. Jesus faithfully adhered to the boundaries set by God, speaking only what God had commanded him to say. He was dedicated to the mission entrusted to him by God, primarily focused on 'witnessing'. Through these verses, God validates the accuracy of Jesus's statements about the true nature of Lordship and servitude.

These verses align perfectly with the central theme and purpose of this chapter: the delineation of God's rights over His servants. They underscore the duty of God's servants to honor the covenant they have made with Him and not to violate it. It highlights that it is not permissible for them to roam and indulge as they please; such freedoms have not been granted by their Lord, nor do they inherently possess the authority to do so. The chapter emphasizes that the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and everything within them, belongs to God, who holds power over all things. The chapter concludes on this profound note, affirming God's sovereignty and the importance of maintaining the divine covenant.

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّيَ
إِلَٰهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي
بِحَقٍّ ۚ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ ۚ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
نَفْسِكَ ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿١١٦﴾

(5:116) And when Allah will say: "O Jesus son of Mary! Did you say to the people: 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah'?" He will say: "Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say); if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; Thou knowest what is in my mind,

and I do not know what is in Thy mind, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things.

"When" is an adverb of time related to an omitted but implied verb which is understood from the context—and it indicates the Day of Resurrection; as God describes: *Allah will say:* "*This is the day when their truth shall benefit the truthful ones;*" and Jesus himself shall say: "*and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them*."

The verse mentions Mary with the attribute of motherhood; it says: "*Take me and my mother for two gods*," instead of saying: 'Take me and Mary for two gods'. It points to their most important proof for Jesus's divinity, that is, his being born of her without a father; thus the sonship and motherhood are the basic ingredients in this matter; therefore mentioning him and his mother was more effective than the mention of Jesus and Mary.

Dūn (low, inadequate) is used ultimately in the sense of 'besides'. al-Rāghib says: "*Dūn* is used to indicate one who is unable to do something; someone has said that it is the reversed form of *dunuw* (proximity) *adwan* means *danīy* (near); God says: *Do not take for intimate friends from among others than your own people; ...*(3:118), that is, he who does not attain your position in religiosity; or, in kinship; the word of God: *... and forgives what is besides that ...* (4:48), that is, lesser than that; or apart from that; and the two meanings are concomitant. And the divine words: *'Did you say to the people: "Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah"?'*, that is, other than God."

The phrase: "besides God," has been used in the Qur'an mostly in the sense of partnership, and not for independent divinity. When it condemns taking one, two or more gods besides God, it means taking someone other than God a partner of God in divinity—it does not mean taking someone else for a god and denying the divinity of God: Surely it would be a foolish talk without any sense, because the one taken as god would be the true God and other than Him would be negated. Thus, it would turn into a verbal dispute about some attributes. For example, if someone says that God is the Christ, and negated God for Christ, it would mean that he affirms the existence of God but attaches to Him human characteristics of the Christ. Or, if he said that the idols or lords of the idols are gods and negated the existence of God, then he admits that there is a god for the universe; thus

he affirms the existence of God, but has ascribed to Him the attributes of plurality and multitude; thus he makes partner for God. Or says as the Christians say that God is the third of the three, that is, one who is three and three who is one.

Likewise, whoever says that the beginning of the world is time or nature and denies that there is a god for it, he indeed affirms that there is a Maker for the world and he is God, but he has ascribed to Him the attributes of defect and transience.

And whoever denies any beginning for this wonderful system and rejects any causality and effectiveness, in spite of the clear decision of his nature, he indeed affirms that there is a world firmly fixed which is not subject of denial or non-existence at all; in other words, the world has an essential existence. Now, the protector of its existence and permanence is either the world itself—which cannot be, because its parts are subject to change and cessation—or another one—and He is God who has His attributes of perfection.

It is thus clear that God does not admit negation in any way, except in apparent wording that is devoid of any understandable meaning.

The basic factor in all this is that man proves the existence of God because of the general need felt in the world for the One who should furnish his existence's requirements and manage the affairs of his system, and then he would affirm the particulars of his existence. Whatever he would affirm for fulfilling this need, he is God. Then if he affirms another god or more gods than one, it will be seen that either he has erred in specification of His attributes and apostatized in His names, or has affirmed for Him a partner or several partners. But to deny His being and affirm someone other than Him, would be a senseless exercise.

Now, it is evident that the phrase "two gods besides God" refers to two entities considered as partners of God, aside from Himself. Even if we were to accept that this phrase does not explicitly imply partnership, it can be interpreted as the belief in two gods distinct in essence from God. However, this interpretation neither explicitly affirms nor denies God's divinity; such a conclusion is not found in the verse but is inferred externally. The Christians, for instance, do not deny God's divinity even though they regard Christ and his mother as two gods besides God.

Some people have found it hard to explain the verse because the

Christians do not believe in the divinity of the virgin Mary; and they have mentioned several points for explaining it.

But it should be kept in mind that the verse mentions their taking her as a goddess, and not that they believe in her as a goddess. Taking someone as a god is quite different from believing in his divinity—except as a concomitant. Taking someone as a god is applicable to submitting to him with humility. God says: *Have you then considered him who takes his base desire for his god?* (45:23). And this theme is narrated from the ancients of Christians, and observed in their descendants.

al-Ālūsī has written in *Rūḥu al-maʿānī*: Verily Abū Jaʿfar al-Imāmī has narrated from some Christians that in the past there was a sect called Maryiyyah; they believed about Mary that she was a goddess. (Rashīd Riḍā) has said in *Tafsīr al-Manār*: As for their taking the Christ as a god, it has already been mentioned in several places in explanation of this chapter; and as for his mother, her worship was agreed upon in the Eastern and the Western Churches after Constantine; then the Protestant denomination (which appeared many centuries after the advent of Islam) rejected her worship.[1]

The worship of Mary, the mother of Christ, by Christians takes various forms. One form is a type of prayer (ṣalāt) that includes praise, pleas for assistance, and intercession. Additionally, there are fasts dedicated to her, known by her name. This reverence is often accompanied by humility and devotion towards her memory, as well as towards her images and icons. It is intertwined with the belief in her authority, which, according to Christian doctrine, stems from the unseen world. This authority is believed to empower her to bring both benefit and harm in this life and the hereafter, either independently or through her son. It has been explicitly stated in their doctrines that worshiping her is obligatory. However, it is not common among their sects to refer to her as a 'goddess'; rather, she is

1 The belief that the Christ was a messenger and not a god is now spreading among American Christians these days—and it is 1958 C.E. The scholar H.G. Wells has written in his Short History: This worship rendered by general Christians to the Christ and his mother does not agree with the teachings of the Christ, because he had forbidden, as quoted in the Gospel according to St. Mark, the worship of any one other than the One God. (Vide pp.526 & 539 of the said book.) (Auth.)

often called the 'Mother of God'. Some sects emphasize that this title is meant in its literal sense, rather than metaphorically.

The Qur'an says here that they had taken Jesus and his mother for two gods, and the taking is other than naming; taking them for gods occurs when they worship them, and this certainly happens in their case. God has said in another verse that they say: *Surely God, He is the Messiah son of Mary; ...* (5:72). But that is something else. And the Prophet has explained the divine words: *They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for Lords besides God, ...* (9:31), that they followed them in what they allowed or forbade, not that they called them Lords.

The first clear declaration that I saw about the Christians really worshipping Mary, was in the book, *al-Sawā'ī*, from among the books of the Greek Orthodox, and I had seen this book in a monastery called Dayr al-Talmīd, when I was first admitted in the educational Institute; and the Catholic declare openly and take pride of it.

al-Jazwīt had decorated in Beirut their magazine, *al-Mashriq* (no.9, year 7) with Mary's picture and colored designs; it was done as a souvenir to celebrate the Golden Jubilee at the end of fifty years since the announcement of the Pope Pius IX that the virgin Mary had become pregnant without pollution of sin; and in that very issue they confirmed that the Eastern as well as the Western Churches worshiped Mary.

Of the same theme is the word of father Luis Shaykhū, in an article of his regarding the Eastern Churches: "Verily the worship by Armenian Church of the chaste virgin, the Mother of God, is certainly a well known affair." He also writes: "The Coptic Church is distinguished by its worship of the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God."

Then he quotes a part of an essay by father Inistas al-Karamli published in the Catholic magazine *al-Mashriq* (no.14, year 5) of Beirut. He writes under the heading, "Antiquity of the Virgin's worship," after mentioning the wording of Genesis, regarding the enmity of the serpent with the woman and her offspring, and interpreting the woman as the Virgin: "Don't you see that you do not find in this text anything clearly pointing to the Virgin until there came that great prophet, Elia the living, and he brought forth the worship of the Virgin from the corner of symbolism and ambiguity to the world of clarity and explanation."

Then he interprets this clarity and explanation by what is written in

the Kings III (according to the Catholic arrangement) that when Elia was with his servant at the summit of Karamli, he ordered him seven times to look towards the sea. After the seventh observation, the servant informed him that he saw a cloud about the size of a man's palm rising from the sea.

The essay writer says: "From that rising (the first rising of the cloud[1]) I say: 'Is it anything except the picture of Mary, according to what the exegetes have established, rather it is the picture of the foetus without the original sin'." Then he says: "This is the origin of the Virgin's worship in the esteemed orient; and it goes back to the tenth century B.C.; and the excellence in this matter goes to this great Prophet Elia." Again he says: "That is why the ancestors of the Karmalites were the first to believe in the Lord Jesus after the apostles and the disciples, and they were the first to establish a place of worship for the Virgin after her being taken away to the heaven with soul and body."[2]

He will say: "***Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I … should say what I had no right to*** (***say***)***; … Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things:*** This and the next verse contain reply of Jesus son of Mary of the question he was asked; and he has adopted in it an amazing manner and etiquette:

He began by glorifying God, when he suddenly and unexpectedly was confronted with what was not proper to be ascribed to that Great and Sublime Being—that is, the people taking them two gods besides God, as His partners. It is a good manner of servitude that the servant should glorify his Lord whenever he hears what is not proper to be ascribed to God or what does not enter into mind in this connection. It is this factor that God has trained His servants in the Qur'an: *And they say: "The Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son." Glory be to Him… .* (21:26); *And they ascribe daughters to Allah, glory be to Him;* (16:57).

Then he turned to refute what was implied in the question that it could be ascribed to him. That he would have told the people to take him and his mother for two gods besides God. He did not only reject it in itself, but refuted its cause to put emphasis on anti-anthropomorphism. Had he

1 It points to the cloud which the servant had seen rising from the sea. (Auth.)

2 We have copied it at length, because a meditating scholar may find in it the type of their 'logic' with which they affirm her worship, and he will also see some of their recklessness in religion. (Auth.)

said: 'I did not say (or do) it', it would have implied that although such an action or talk was possible but he did not do it; but when he refuted its cause and said: 'It did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say)', it refuted the basis of such talk; this refutation of such a right also more intensely refutes what depends on it. Let us suppose that a master says to his servant: 'Why did you do what I had not told you to do?' Now, if the servant says: 'I did not do it', it would refute what was expected to happen; but if he said, 'I am rather unable to do it', it would refute it by refuting its cause; it would be rejection of its basic possibility, let alone its actual occurrence.

... it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say): If the verb, *mā yakūn* (it does not happen) is a defective verb, then its subject is "that I should say," and the predicate is "what I had no right to (say)," and "L" denotes possession. The meaning then will be: 'I do not possess what I was not given possession of, and it does not befit me to speak without any right.' On the other hand, if this verb is 'complete', then the word, 'me', is related to it, and the phrase: "that I should say," is its subject; and then the meaning will be: 'It does not occur to me to speak without any right.' And the former is nearer interpretation. In any case, it negates the action by negating its cause.

... if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it: It is second rejection of the question asked—not on its own but through rejection of its concomitant; because if such words were uttered, God would certainly know it, because He it is from whom nothing is hidden, neither in the earth nor in the heavens, and He watches every soul as to what it earns, and He encompasses everything.

Jesus's speech, at its outset, not only asserts a claim but substantiates it with proof. It further suggests that throughout his discourses and deeds, he was always mindful of God's omniscience, unconcerned with whether other beings were aware or not, as his primary focus was on God alone.

In essence, questioning is appropriate in contexts where ignorance is possible, serving either to enlighten the inquirer or to inform others. This latter purpose aligns with the nature of the inquiry in the divine dialogue. Jesus's response, "*if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it*," shifts the focus to God's all-knowing nature, underscoring that his every word and action were always aligned with and aware of divine knowledge.

Then he said: "*Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind*": This indicates the purity of the divine knowledge from mixing with ignorance. Although the sentence, in itself, denotes praise; but praise is not intended here, because it is not the place of praise; rather it is the place of getting rid of the attributions that were ascribed to Him.

His words: "*Thou knowest what is in my mind*," elaborates the comprehensiveness of the knowledge mentioned in the phrase: "*if I had said it, Thou wouldst have known it*." It shows that God's knowledge of our deeds—and He is the King, the Truth on that day—is not like the knowledge of our kings about the condition of their subjects; as they receive reports from various parts of their kingdom, and consequently they know things in part and remain ignorant of other parts. God is the Knower of subtleties, Aware of all things, including the soul of Jesus son of Mary in particular.

Even then, he could not fully elaborate the attributes of His knowledge. God knows everything, not as one of us knows about someone else, and someone else knows about one of us. He knows what He knows by encompassing the object; while nothing encompasses Him, and they cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge. Thus He, the

Sublime, is God, without any limit, and everyone beside Him is limited, determined, which cannot transcend the boundary of his limited soul. That is why he added to it another sentence: "Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind."

As for his words: "*surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things*," it gives the reason of his words: "*Thou knowest what is in my mind ...*" It removes the possible misunderstanding that the matter of knowledge in the sentence: "*Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind*," is confined to what is between him and his Lord, and does not encompass all things. So, by saying: "*surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things*," he made it clear that the complete knowledge of all unseen things is reserved for God. Whatever knowledge is held by anything and is unseen by other things, it is indeed known by God and He encompasses it.

It follows that nothing is aware of the unseen thing of God or of other than God's—which God knows—because everything is created and limited and does not transcend its own phases. Thus, God is the great Knower of all

unseen things, and nothing besides Him knows any of the unseen things, neither whole nor in part.

Furthermore, if an aspect of God's unseen realm were to be encompassed by something, and if God were to then encompass it, that supposedly encompassing entity would not truly be the encompassing but rather the encompassed. This is because God, in His will, has granted it the ability to encompass certain aspects of His domain. However, this does not imply that these aspects are removed from His ownership. As God says: *... and they cannot comprehend any thing out of His knowledge except what He pleases; ...* (2:255)

If God were not to comprehend what He comprehends, He would become subject to a limit, and thus would become a created thing; far exalted is He from such things!

مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ۚ وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتَ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَأَنْتَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١١٧﴾

(5:117) I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with: 'That worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord', and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou had taken me away, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things.

Initially countering the claim by denying its cause, Jesus now further refutes it by clarifying the scope of his responsibility, which he never overstepped. So, he said, "*I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with ...*" By employing a structure that combines negation and affirmation, he directly addresses and dismisses the claim of being worshipped alongside his mother as gods besides *Allah*. He then specifies the directive he received from God: "*That worship God*," and further defines God as "*my Lord and your Lord*." This explicit clarification is intended to eliminate any potential misunderstandings, unequivocally establishing that he is a servant and messenger who advocates worshipping God alone, the singular Lord of all, without any partners.

In such a clear style Jesus, son of Mary, used to call the people to

monotheism, as the Qur'an quotes him as saying in other places too: *Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him; this is the right path*. (43:64); *And surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him; this is the right path.* (19:36).

... and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou had taken me away, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things: Now, he mentioned the second responsibility entrusted to him by God, and that was to be a witness of his people's deeds, as God says: *and on the Day of Resurrection he* (Jesus) *shall be a witness over them.* (4:159).

He declares: 'I had only two responsibilities towards them, to convey the message to them and to be a witness of their deeds; as for the messengership, I performed it in clearest possible terms; and as for the witnessing, I did not transgress the task You had enjoined me with; so I am free from the blame that I might have told them to take me and my mother for two gods besides *Allah*.'

... but when Thou had taken me away, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things: *al-Raqūb* and *al-riqābah* (protection, preservation); in this context, it denotes preservation of deeds. The word, witness, has been changed to 'watcher', to avoid repetition because the next phrase contains this word: "and Thou art witness of all things," and there was no reason why this word especially should be used second time.

The clause: "*Thou wert the watcher over them*," denotes restriction. It follows that God was the witness as long as Jesus was the witness, and He continued to be witness after him. So his witnessing was a mediation in witnessing, not an independent witnessing; it is like all other divine arrangements by which He has given some servants agency of some functions, while He is the real manager of everything, like sustenance, giving life and death, preservation, call and guidance, etc. There are numerous noble verses showing this aspect, which need not be quoted here.

That is why Jesus, after saying: "*but when Thou had taken me away, Thou wert the watcher over them*," added the next clause: "*and Thou art witness of all things*." This style was used to denote that his being a witness over his people's deeds, which he continued to perform as long as he was among them, was a small part of the general, comprehensive witnessing, that is, the witnessing of God over a thing; because God is the witness

over the individual things and their activities, including the deeds of His servants together with the deeds of the people of Jesus as long as he was among them and after his death, and He is the witness together with other witnesses and the witness without other witnesses.

It is clear from the above that the restriction is true concerning God even when other witnesses offer their testimonies, because Jesus has restricted the testimony after his death to God, although God had His other witnesses after Jesus's death among His servants and messengers, and he was well aware of it.

And its proof may be seen in the good news he gave of the advent of the Holy Prophet, as quoted in the Qur'an: *And when Jesus son of Mary said: "O Children of Israel! Surely I am the messenger of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah, and giving the good news of a messenger who will come after me, his name being Aḥmad" ...* (61:6); and the Qur'an has clearly mentioned the Prophet being a witness, as God says: *... and bring you as a witness over these?* (4:41).

Moreover, God has quoted him as describing this restriction: "but when Thou had taken me away, Thou wert the watcher over them," and has not refuted it. So, God is the witness, and no one else, in spite of there being witnesses. It means that the reality of witnessing belongs to God, in the same way as every perfection and goodness belongs to God; whatever perfection, goodness or beauty He gives to others, it emanates from His bestowal of possession, without this bestowal making Him divested of possession or causing negation of His ownership. You should meditate on various aspects what we have said.

It is clear from Jesus's condition described in these two verses, that he is innocent of what had been said about him, and that he has no responsibility at all regarding their deeds. That is why he has ended his speech on the words: "*If Thou shouldst chastise them ... surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.*"

إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ ۖ وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾

(5:118) If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise."

When it became clear, through his proofs, that he had no responsibility towards the people except conveyance of the message and delivery of the testimony, and that he did not do except that and did not cross the limit to what he had no right to, and thus he was not liable to what they uttered of the words of disbelief, then it is obvious that he has nothing to do with the divine judgement concerning them and their Lord. That is why he has started this new topic without any conjunctive or any indication that it branches from the preceding speech.

The verse effectively encapsulates the foregoing explanation. Its essence is as follows: "I hold no responsibility for the abhorrent polytheism they have embraced. I did not involve myself in their affairs to the extent of influencing Your judgement upon them. Whatever You decide for them, be it in Your pleasure or Your decree, they alone must confront it. If You choose to punish them, as is Your prerogative with those who associate partners with You, by casting them into the Fire, then they remain Your servants. The management of their affairs lies solely in Your hands, and You have every right to be displeased with them, as You are the true Master and the affairs of the servants belong to the master. Conversely, if You opt for forgiveness, erasing the impact of this grave injustice, then indeed You are the Mighty, the Wise. The prerogative of power and wisdom belongs to You. A mighty being, endowed with unparalleled seriousness and power, particularly when combined with wisdom (which ensures actions are appropriate and just), possesses the authority to pardon even grave injustices. When power and wisdom converge in one, no external force can challenge it, nor can there be any ambiguity in the decisions made."

The explanation provided above elucidates two key points:

First: When Jesus says, "*then surely they are Thy servants*," it essentially implies 'then surely Thou art their true Master.' This aligns with the Qur'anic style of introducing the names of God following a description of His actions, as observed at the end of this verse.

Second: The phrase "*then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise*" is not intended as a limitation. The use of the detached personal pronoun for the second person singular and the addition of '*al*' to the predicate serve to emphasize the statement. The intended meaning is: 'Certainly, there can be no doubt about Thy Power and Wisdom. No one holds the authority to question Your actions if You choose to forgive them.'

Third: The context of Jesus son of Mary's conversation with God, which can be likened to a direct, 'face-to-face' dialogue, occurred in the presence of the divine Majesty. This Majesty is so profound that nothing can withstand it, and it demands to be met with the utmost humility characteristic of servitude. In such a situation, a servant must refrain from any form of intercession or questioning. This is why Jesus says, "*and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.*" Note that he does not say, 'Thou art the Forgiving, the Merciful.' The reason is that the dazzling display of divine Majesty and authority, which overpowers all, leaves the servant with no option but to seek refuge in God with complete humility and acknowledgment of their own servitude and helplessness. To assume a more casual stance in such a scenario would be a grave transgression.

As for the words of Abraham addressed to his Lord: *then whoever follows me, he is surely of me, and whoever disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful;* it is an invocation; and a servant has full right to incite the divine mercy in any way possible.

قَالَ اللَّهُ هَٰذَا يَوْمُ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ ۚ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۚ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١١٩﴾

(5:119) Allah will say: "This is the day when their truth shall benefit the truthful ones; they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them forever; Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him; this is the mighty achievement."

This is the confirmation of the truth of Jesus son of Mary in an illusive way; God has not declared his name, but it is known from the context.

This truth of the truthful ones refers to their truth in this world; because God says after this sentence: *they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them forever*. Obviously, it elaborates the reward of their truth near God—it is the benefit of the truth which will return to them; while the next world's deeds and conditions—including the truth of the people of the next world—will not bring any benefit as reward. In other words, no reward is given on the deeds and conditions of the next

world, as it is given on this world's deeds and conditions, because there is no *taklīf* (religious responsibility) in the next world, and reward is a branch of the *taklīf*. Obviously, the next world is a house of reckoning, reward and punishment, in the same way as this world is a house of action and responsibility. God says: *... on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass!* (14:41); *... today you shall be rewarded for what you did.* (45:28); *... This life of the world is only a* (passing) *enjoyment, and surely the hereafter is the abode to settle.* (40:39).

Jesus's discourse about his earthly life encompassed both his words and actions, and God has affirmed his truthfulness in both aspects. Consequently, the truth referenced in this verse encompasses not just truth in words but also truth in actions. Therefore, those who have demonstrated truthfulness in both their words and deeds in this world will reap the benefits of their truthfulness on the Day of Resurrection. They will be granted the promised gardens, find favor in God's sight and be pleasing to Him, ultimately achieving the greatest success.

Apart from that, truth in words necessitates truth in deeds—that is, clarity and purity of deeds from stigma of hypocrisy—and leads it to goodness. It is reported that a Bedouin asked the Prophet for an advice; so he admonished him not to tell a lie. Thereafter, the man narrated that adherence to what he was advised to, prevented him from all sins; because whenever a sin tempted him, he remembered that if he did it and then was asked about it, he would be obliged to confess its commission and inform the people about it; so he did not do it because of that fear.

... they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them forever; Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Allah; this is the mighty achievement: God shall be well pleased with them because of the truth which they had sent before them, and they shall be well pleased with God because of the reward which He will bestow on them.

The verse has attached the pleasure with their selves, and not with their deeds, unlike the divine words: *and whose words He is pleased with.* (20:109); *and if you are grateful, He shall be pleased with it in you; ...* (39:7). There is a difference between these two pleasures: Your pleasure with a thing means that you do not push it away with dislike; it is possible for your enemy to bring up an action which you like, although you are angry with him; and for a friend whom you love to do a deed which you do not like.

Thus, the words: "God is well pleased with them," denote that God likes their selves; and it is known that this pleasure cannot take place unless there appears the purpose for which God has created them; and He has said: *And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should worship Me* (51:56). So, this servitude and worship is the divine object for which man has been created. God shall be pleased with a servant's soul only when he shall become an exemplary worshipper. In other words, when his soul will be the soul of a servant of God Who is the Lord of everything; he does not see his own soul, nor anything else; but he is only a slave of God who is submissive to His Lordship, who does not turn except to Him and does not return but to Him, as He says about Job: ... *most excellent the servant! Surely he was frequent in returning* (to God), (38: 44); and this is their being pleased with Him.

This is one of the stations of servitude. Its concomitant is the purity of the soul from disbelief (in all its ranks) and from transgression, as God says: ... *and He does not like ungratefulness in His servants;* ... (39:7); ... *yet surely Allah is not pleased with the transgressing people* (9:96).

It is one of the signs of this position that when servitude takes hold of a servant's soul and he sees that all that he perceives with his external eyes and internal insight is owned by God and is submissive to His order, then he will be pleased with God, because he will realize that whatever has God given him, has given it from His Grace, so it is His generosity and bounty, and whatever He has stopped from him, He has done it for some reason.

Moreover, God says about them when they shall be in the Garden: *They shall have in them what they please.* (16:31; 25:16). And it is known that when man gets all that he wishes, and then naturally he will be pleased. This is the utmost human bliss and felicity in his servitude, and that is why the talk ends on the clause: "this is the mighty achievement."

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا فِيهِنَّ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾

(5:120) Allah's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is in them; and He has power over all things.

al-Milk (ownership) is a special authority on individual things, and its effect is permeation of the owner's will in the things he has the power to manage; and *al-mulk* (kingdom) is the special authority over the system

prevalent among the things, and its effect is permeation of the owner's will in the things he has the power to manage; in simple words, *al-milk* (ownership) relates to an individual and *al-mulk* (kingdom) to a group.

Inasmuch as the kingdom, in its actions, is restricted with, or formed by, the power, therefore when the power is complete and unrestricted, the kingdom shall be all-comprehensive, not restricted with one thing besides the other, nor confined to one condition, beside the other. To draw attention to this fine point, the sentence: "God's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is in them;" is followed by the clause: "and He has power over all things."

The chapter concludes with this verse that signifies His all-encompassing Kingdom. The connection here is evident: the chapter aims to exhort the servants towards fulfilling the covenants and agreements that their Lord, the absolute ruler, has established with them. As such, their primary status is that of wholly owned servants; their only option in response to His commands or prohibitions is to hear and obey. Likewise, regarding any agreement or covenant He establishes with them, their duty is to adhere to it faithfully, ensuring it remains unbroken.

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Examining Narrations

(1) Thaʿlabah b. Maymūn narrates through some of our companions from Abū Jaʿfar that he said about the words of God, the Blessed, the Sublime, to Jesus: "*Did you say to the people: 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah'?*" "He had not said it, but will soon say so; surely when God knows that a thing is to happen (in future), He speaks about it as a done thing." (*al-Tafsīr*, al-ʿAyyāshī)

Author's comment: The same book narrates a similar tradition from Sulaymān b. Khālid from Abū ʿAbdillāh. Its gist is that information of the future has been given in past tense because it is known to take place certainly; and such usage is common in the language.

(2) Jābir al-Juʿfī has narrated from Abū Jaʿfar in explanation of the sentences: *Thou knowest what is in my mind, I do not know what is in Thy mind, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things,* that he said, "Surely the great name of God is seventy three letters; and the Lord, the Blessed, the Sublime, has kept hidden one of the letters; that is why nobody knows what is in His mind, to Whom

> belong Might and Majesty. Adam was given seventy two letters, so, the prophets inherited it from one another, until it reached Jesus; that is the (meaning of) the word of Jesus: *'Thou knowest what is in my mind'*, that is, seventy two letters of the great name; he means to say: 'Thou hast taught them to me, so Thou (certainly) knowest them; and I do not know what is in Thy mind'; he wants to say: 'because Thou hast hidden that letter, so nobody knows what is in Thy mind'." (*ibid.*)

Author's comment: We shall extensively explain about the good names of God and His great name, under the verse: *And Allah's are the best names, therefore call on Him thereby; ...* (7:180). There it will become clear that the great name or the big name is not made up of alphabets; in such places name actually means the named one, that is, the person of God looked at with one of His attributes or one of the aspects; accordingly the name in words would be the name of the name, as will be explained later.

Accordingly, the Imām's words, that the Great Name is made up of seventy-three letters, and similar expressions which have come in numerous traditions of this topic, that the Great Name is made up of so many letters, and that they are scattered in such and such chapter, or such and such verse, all these are talks based on symbolism, they are parables to make the people understand what is feasible to understand of the realities; for not every reality can be explained clearly without allusion.

It will explain the meaning of the *ḥadīth* to a certain extent if we say: There is no doubt that God's good names are the mediums for manifestation of the universe in its species and appearance of its innumerable occurrences. Also, we have no doubt that God created His creatures, because He is the Creator, Magnanimous, and Originator, for example; not because He is the Avenger and the Mighty in retribution. He gives sustenance to whom He sustains, because He is the Sustainer and Bestower, for instance, not because He is the Holder and Forbidding. He bestows life to the living, because He is the Living and Life giving, not because He is death giving, and returning. The Qur'anic verses are the most truthful witnesses of this reality, because we see the realities elaborated in a verse, are justified at the end with the divine name appropriate for that theme. Often the verse ends with one such name, and sometimes it ends with two names, which together illuminate its topic.

It appear from the above that if one of us is given the knowledge of the names, and if he knew the connections between those names and the things and understood what the divine names, individually and combined, demanded, he would know the system of the universe, with all the general laws which govern it and which are applied to its individual parts one after another.

The noble Qur'an, as is understood from its apparent meanings, has described many general laws regarding the genesis and the return, and what God has arranged concerning the felicity and infelicity; and then it has told the Prophet: ... *and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything, ...* (16:89).

However, all of them are general laws, which are necessary. But they are necessary not in themselves, not by demand of their own selves; but through that necessity and inevitability which God has bestowed on it. Now that this intellectual and definite authority comes from God's side, and by His order and will, it is clear that God's action cannot compel Him at all in this regard, nor would it overpower Him in His person; He, Glorified be He, is the Subduer and Predominant; how can a thing subdue Him which returns to Him from every direction, and depends on Him in its substance and effect. Understand it.

It is therefore impossible that the intellect (which decides whatever it does by God's bestowal on it) or the realities (whose laws and effects do exist by His will) would have any authority over Him or demand something from Him, by the same decision and demand that God Himself keeps them active and subdues them. In other words, whatever demand or decision is found in the things emanates from the transfers of ownership which God has given to it; thus He, the High, is the absolute owner, and He cannot be owned in any way.

If God were to give good reward to a sinner, or to punish a good-doer, or did any type of deed, which He wished, there was no harm in it, and there was nothing to prevent it—neither the reason nor any extraneous matter. But God has promised us and threatened us, the felicity and infelicity, and good reward and tough recompense; and He has informed us that He does not break His promise; and He has informed us about some things by the way of revelation or through our intellect, and He has mentioned that He does not speak except truth. Thus our souls became

tranquil with Him, and our hearts were at ease towards Him—without any doubt finding a way to it. God says: *surely Allah fails not in* (His) *promise.* (3:9; 13:31); *and the truth do I speak.* (38:84).

What God has explained it is the demand of His names, as we have known by His teaching. But beyond that is the fact that He, the Sublime, is the absolute owner, He has the right and power to do what He wishes and decide what He wants. God says: *He is not questioned concerning what He does and they shall be questioned.* (21:23). This meaning itself is one of His names which is of unknown essence; none of His creatures has any way of knowing it. It is because whatever we know of His names is what one or other of the concepts shows, and then we identify by its relationship its effects in existence. As for those effects that there is no way of identifying them, they inviolably are the effects of a name that there is no way to know its meaning. You may say that it is a name that cannot be hunted down by a concept; rather, it somehow is pointed to by the attribute of His absolute ownership.

Thus it is clear that there are some of His names to which no creature has got a way—and it is the name, which He has kept hidden. So understand it.

A Talk on the Meaning of Good Manners

We shall talk here in various chapters on the good manners, which God has taught His prophets and messengers, peace be on them all.

(1) *al-Adab* (the manners) is the good form on which the lawful action should take place, either in religion or near intellectuals in their society, like the manner of prayer, the etiquette of visiting the friends; or you may say, gracefulness of intellect.

It does not appear except in lawful things, not forbidden ones. There is no manner in injustice, treachery and falsehood; nor is there any manner in ignominious and ugly deeds. Also, it does not take place except in voluntary actions, which may be performed in more than one way, so that some would agree with manners, beside the others. For example, there is the manner of eating in Islam that one begins it in the name of God and ends on the thanks for God and that one should eat less than one's fill. Or there is the manner of sitting in *ṣalāt* that one sits on one side of one's thigh, keeping the palms on thighs above the knees, and looking at the lap.

As the manners are the good form of voluntary actions and good deeds, and according to its original meaning, it denotes agreement with the aim of life. Although there is no dispute among the societies in this basic theme, yet when it comes to identification of its substance, there appears a lot of discord, among various communities, nations, religions and denominations. It appears even in very small societies like a family, in identification of good and evil, and in manners of deeds.

Often a community observes some manners, which the others do not know about; sometimes an action is considered good by a community while another group thinks it evil. For example, greeting on meeting someone: In Islam it is by saying: *al-Salām ʿalaykum*, that is, blessed, peace and pure safety be to you from God; and in some nations it is by taking off the caps, in others it is by raising the hand in front of the head, in some others it is done by prostration, or bowing down or bending with bowed head; as there are among the Westerners the manners of meeting with women which Islam condemns and considers disgusting, and so on.

However, all these differences have cropped up at the stage of identification of manners; as for the basic meaning of the manners, it is unanimously agreed by all sane persons—that it is the good form in which the actions should take place. Also, there is no difference in that it is a good thing.

(2) As the goodness and beauty are among the ingredients of the good manners, as described above, and this differs from society to society according to their particular objectives, this inevitably has given rise to differences in man's sociological manners. The manner in every society is like a mirror, which reflects that general society's ethical characteristics which have been arranged in them by their lives' objectives; and have been concentrated in their souls by their social factors and other natural or chancy agents.

Manners are not ethics, because ethics is the deeply ingrained psychological trait, which are adopted by the souls, while manners are various good forms, which affect the actions, which are done by man because of various psychological attributes—and there is a vast difference between the two.

Thus, manners sprout from the ethics, and ethics is among the demands of society in particular according to its especial objective. The objective, which man desires in his life, identifies his manners in his actions, and draws for him a line which he does not cross, when he performs an

action in his life and acquires nearness from his destination.

(3) As the manner follows, in its particulars, the desired destination of the life, therefore, the divine manners, which God, the Glorified, teaches His prophets and messengers (peace be upon them), and trains them on, is the good form of religious actions which are in harmony with the religion's aims and objectives—and it is the servitude with differences in the true religions, according to abundance or shortage of its substance and depending on its ranks in perfection and sublimity.

As the Islam deals with all the life-affairs of the human beings, in such a way that nothing of it, big or little, great or small, goes out of its fold, therefore it has encompassed the life with manners, and laid down for every deed a good form which is in harmony with its objective.

However, it has no general objective except the belief in one God in both stages of faith and action together. It means that man should believe that there is a God, from Whom is the genesis of everything and to Whom everything is to return; for Him are the good names and sublime parables. Then this monotheism runs throughout the life and lives in the actions, it manifests in itself the servitude of man and all that he has to God, Great is His name! In this way the monotheism permeates in its esoteric and exoteric, and the pure servitude is manifested from his words, deeds and all aspects of his existence, a manifestation where there is no veil over it, nor any cover to hide it.

In short, the divine manner—or prophetic manner—is the form of monotheism in action.

(4) The reason shows and definite experience supports that the practical knowledge—that is, the knowledge that is acquired in order to act upon it—does not fully succeed and does not bring about its good effects if it is not put before a learner in practical way. It is because unless the general academic principles are applied to its individual cases, human soul finds it difficult to accept it and to believe in its correctness, because our soul throughout our life remains engaged with perceivable components, and it feels tired, as its second nature, from observation of intellectual general principles, which are beyond our senses. A man who affirms the goodness of bravery, *per se*, then he faces a dreadful situation in which the hearts tremble; now a dispute starts between his intellect (which affirms the goodness of bravery) and his feeling which pulls him towards caution

against facing physical destruction and loss of fine material life; thus the soul remains oscillating between this and that, and cannot decide which of the two opposing sides to support, and strength is found in the side of the feeling because it accompanies senses.

Thus, it is incumbent during teaching that the student is taught intellectual realities accompanied by practice, so that he gets training through action and is drilled on it, and it would erase the opposing ideas which might be hidden in corners of his soul, and affirmation of what he learns would be firmly rooted in mind, because occurrence is the best evidence of possibility.

That is why we see that an action whose real occurrence is not experienced by the soul, it becomes difficult for the soul to submit to it. So, when it occurs for the first time it seems as it has turned from impossibility to possibility, and it appears to be a great affair, and creates agitation and perturbation in the mind. Then if it happens more than two or three times, it becomes easier and its severity is broken, joining the fold of usual things, which become unimportant. Surely the good is a habit as the evil is a habit.

Consideration of this style in religious teachings, and especially in Islamic religious education, is among the clearest affairs. The Law-giver of religion, in teaching the believers, has not adopted to teach intellectual generalities and overall legislations; rather he has started with deeds and then has gone to words and verbal explanations; when a believer completes learning religious cognition and its laws, he does so and he is equipped with good deeds and furnished with piety.

Likewise, it is incumbent that the teacher and trainer must be acting on his knowledge, because knowledge has no effect if it is not joined by practice; the action shows the way exactly as the words show the way. If the action opposes the words, then it shows that there is an opposite form in the soul that opposes the words; thus it proves that the said word is a trick and a sort of deception, which the speaker uses for cheating the people and preying on them.

That is why we see that the hearts of the people do not incline, and their souls do not lean, towards a sermon and admonition when they find that the preacher or the advisor does not follow his own admonition or advice; and does not have patience and steadfastness in its path. Often they say: If his words were true, he would have acted on them. However

they seem confused in drawing this result. The result in the above case is as follows: These words are not true in the eyes of the speaker, because if he believed them to be true he would have acted on them. But it does not give the result that the words are not true at all—as they sometimes draw it.

It is one of the conditions of good bringing up that the teacher and trainer himself should have the attributes which he wants the trainee to acquire; because it is impossible in practice that a coward would train a courageous and brave person, or that a well-balanced scholar should come up from the school of prejudice and stubbornness.

God says: *Is He then Who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who himself does not go aright unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you; how do you judge.* (10:35); *What! Do you enjoin men to be good and forget your own selves ...* (2:44)? And He quotes Shu'ayb telling his people: *... and I do not desire that in opposition to you I should betake myself to that which I forbid you; I desire nothing but reform so far as I am able, ...* (11:88); and there are many similar verses.

Because of all these factors it was incumbent that the teacher and trainer must have full faith in the substance of his teaching and training.

Apart from that, even a man who has no faith in what he says, even a hypocrite who covers himself with good deeds, and pretends to have pure unalloyed faith, does not train on his hand except a one who represents him in his unclean soul; even if it is possible to create separation between tongue and heart by speaking what the soul is not pleased with and the inner idea does not agree with; yet speaking is a sort of action, and action is an effect of the soul, and how can an action go against the nature of its doer?

Thus the speech, apart from its denoting the meaning for which it is made, carries the nature of the speaker's soul, like belief or disbelief and so on. Its maker, and its conveyer to the simple soul of the student does not differentiate the aspect of its goodness—that is, the aspect of its laid down meaning—from the aspect of its ugliness—and it is all other aspects—except the one who has the insight of the reality. God says to His Prophet regarding the hypocrites: *... and most certainly you may recognize them by the intent of* (their) *speech; ...* (47:30) So, the training which brings good effect in its wake is that one in which the teacher and trainer has faith in what he presents before his students, accompanied by good deeds that agree with his knowledge, but as for the one who does not believe in what

he says, or who does not act according to his knowledge, no good can be expected from such a person.

There are many and innumerable examples for this reality in the conduct of us, the orientals and especially the Islamists, in teaching and training in our official and unofficial institutes, that no effort seems to succeed, and no planning to be of any benefit.

(5) To this chapter returns what we see in the divine speech that it contains pieces of divine manners which are reflected in actions of the prophets and the messengers (peace be on them) which are connected with God, Glorified be He—including various facets of their worship, invocations and urging, also those which are related to the people in their dealings and addresses; it is because bringing in the examples in education are a sort of practical teaching with evidence in practice.

God says, after narrating the story of Abraham with his people, regarding the Oneness of God: And this was Our argument that We gave to Abraham against his people; We exalt in dignity whom We please; surely your Lord is Wise, Knowing. And We gave to him Isaac and Jacob; each did We guide, and Noah did We guide before, and of his descendants, David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Aaron; and thus do We reward those who do good (to others). And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Ilyās; every one was of the good; and Ishmael and al-Yasa‘ and Jonah and Lot; and every one We made to excel the worlds: And from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren, and We chose them and guided them into the right way. This is God's guidance, He guides thereby whom He pleases of His servants; and if they had set up others (with Him), certainly what they did would have become forfeited for them. These are they to whom We gave the Book and the Wisdom and the Prophecy; therefore if these disbelieve in it We have already entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it. These are they whom God guided; therefore follow their guidance. (6:84–91)

God mentions here His noble prophets (peace be on them) comprehensively, and then says that He exalted them with divine guidance; and it was the guidance to monotheism only; its proof is found in the clause: *and if they had set up others* (with Him)*, certainly what they did would have become forfeited for them*; mark that He in this place contrasts His bounty of guidance which He had bestowed on them with polytheism only; thus

He had guided them to the monotheism only.

However, the order of monotheism flowed into their actions, gaining ground in it. Its proof is seen in the clause: *certainly what they did would have been forfeited for them;* if polytheism were not flowing in the actions, infiltrating in them, it would not have caused their forfeiture. The same would apply to its opposite, themonotheism.

What is the meaning of flowing of monotheism in actions? It means that the actions' forms represent monotheism, and reflect them as a mirror reflects the image of the looker in. It is such that if monotheism were supposed to be imagined, it would be exactly those actions; and if those actions were abstracted into pure beliefs, it would be exactly those.

This meaning has many examples in psychological attributes. For example, you find that the actions of a proud person exemplify the pride and haughtiness that are hidden in his soul. Likewise, all movements and stillness of a wretched poor man expose what is hidden in his inner self of humiliation and submissiveness, and so on.

Thereafter, God taught good manners to His Prophet, and commanded him to follow the guidance of the prophets who had preceded him; he was not supposed to follow (their persons, but their guidance). One follows someone else in action; and not in belief, because belief is outside one's option, *per se*, that is, he should choose their good actions, which were based on monotheism, and performed by them through practical divine training.

We mean by this practical training what is pointed out by the divine words: *And We made them Imāms who guided* (people) *by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of the* zakāt*, and Us* (alone) *did they worship.* (21:73). The genetive construction using the *maṣdar*s as the first constructs in: *doing of good*, *Keeping up of prayer* and *giving of the* zakāt, denotes that they refer to the actual good they did, prayers they kept up and the *zakāt* they gave, and not only to performing the supposed deeds. Thus this revelation, which was sent to them when they were engaged in this performance, was the revelation to show the right way and to teach the manners; it was not the revelation of prophecy and legislation. Had it meant the revelation of prophecy, the sentence would have been as follows: 'And We revealed to them that you should do good deeds, keep up prayer and give the *zakāt*'—as

we see in the verse: *Then We revealed to you: Follow the faith of Abraham, ...* (16:123); *And We revealed to Moses and his brother, saying: "Take for your people houses to abide in Egypt and make you houses places of worship and keep up prayer ..."* (10:87), and many similar verses. The revelation to show the right way means that God bestows on one of His servants a holy spirit which supports and strengthens him in good deeds and in remaining cautious against evil; in the same way as the human spirit supports us in thinking about good and evil, and the animalistic spirit in choosing what we desire through wilful attraction and repulsion. A detailed talk on this topic will be given later on,God willing.

In short, the clause: *therefore follow their guidance*, is a general divine ethical teaching to the Prophet with the manner of monotheism, which is spread over the prophets' actions and free from polytheism.

God has likewise mentioned several of His prophets (peace be on them) in the chapter of "Mary," and then said: *These are they on whom Allah bestowed favors, from among the prophets of the seed of Adam, and of those whom We carried with Noah, and of the seed of Abraham and Jacob, and of those whom We guided and chose; when the signs of the Beneficent God were recited to them, they fell down making obeisance and weeping. But there came after them an evil generation, who neglected prayers and followed the sensual desires, so they will meet perdition, except such as repent and believe and do good, these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly in any way.* (19:58–60).

In this way, God mentioned their general manners in their life, that they live with submission to God in activities and humility towards Him in heart; their prostration and recital of God's sign is the example of submission, and their weeping which emanates from softness of heart and humbleness of soul is the sign of humility; and both together allude to the domination of the attribute of servitude over their souls, inasmuch as whenever they are reminded of a sign of God, its effect appears on their exterior as well as it dominates their inner self. Thus they are on their divine manner, and it is the mark of the servitude when they are alone with their Lord and its mark when they mix with the people. They live on the divine manner with their Lord and with the people.

The proof that it means general manners may be found in the next verse: *But there came after them an evil generation, who neglected prayers and*

followed the sensual desires. Prayer is paying attention to God and its neglecting shows their condition with their Lord, and following the sensual desires points to their condition with the people. As these people stand parallel to the preceding group, it indicates that the prophets' general manner is that they turn to their Lord with the mark of servitude and deal with the people with the mark of servitude. It means that the structure of their lives is founded on the foundation that they do have a Lord who owns them and manages their affairs, from Him is their genesis and to Him is their return. So this is the basis of all their conditions and actions.

The exception mentioned of those who repented among them is another divine manner. It begins with Adam, the first of the prophets, as He says: *and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so his life became evil* (to him). *Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided* (him). (20:121–2). God willing, some talk on it will follow.

God says: *There is no harm in the Prophet doing that which Allah has ordained for him; such has been the course of Allah with respect to those who have gone before; and the command of Allah is a decree that is made absolute: Those who deliver the messages of Allah and fear Him, and do not fear any one but Allah; and Allah is sufficient to take account.* (33:38–39).

It is a general manner which God trained His prophets on (peace be upon them), and His continuously running course about them: That they should not be distressed by the life destined for them and should not be affected in any affair; they are on the nature, and the nature does not guide except to what God has equipped it to acquire, which agrees to it; it does not affect to dominate what God has not made it easy for it to rise to it. God quotes His Prophet as saying: " *... nor am I of those who affect:*" (38:86); *Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; ...* (2:286); *... Allah does not lay on any soul a burden except to the extent to which He has granted it; ...* (65:7). As affectation is going beyond nature, it is a kind of following the sensuous desires, and the prophets are protected from it.

God says—and this too is training for comprehensive manner: *O Messengers! Eat of the good things and do good; surely I know what you do. And surely this religion is one religion and I am your Lord, therefore fear Me* (23:51–52). God taught and trained them to eat of the good things. In other words, they should use the good things from the provisions of life,

and should not cross the boundary to the repulsive things towards which the healthy nature feels aversion. They should do the good deeds—those which are good for man to perform, to which the nature is inclined according to the powers with which God has equipped him, and through them his life continues to an appointed time and destination. Or they should do the deeds, which may be presented at the divine presence. Both these meanings are nearer to each other. So this is the manner relating to an individual.

Then God has joined it to group manner. He mentioned that the people were but a single nation—those who were sent and those to whom they were sent; they do not have except the one Lord, so they should join together in piety; in this way they should cut off the roots of grouping and divisiveness. When these two types of manners, that is, of individual and of group, join together, they constitute a human society, protected from discord, which worships one Lord; its individuals carry on divine manner, and they refrain from evil deeds and bad actions; thus they are firmly settled on the pedestal of felicity.

This is what is gathered from another verse: *He has laid down for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus, that keep up the religion and be not divided therein; ...* (42:13).

And God has differentiated between the two types of manners in another place and has said: *And We did not send before you any messenger but We revealed to him that there is no god but Me, therefore worship Me* (21:25). In this way, he taught them His monotheism and trained them to base His worship on it. This was their manner *vis-à-vis* the Lord. Also, He has said: *And they say: "What is the matter with this Messenger that he eats food and goes about in the markets; why has not an angel been sent down to him, so that he should have been a warner with him? Or* (why is not) *a treasure sent down to him, or he is made to have a garden from which he should eat?.* (25:7–8). Then God replies to it: *And We have not sent before you any messengers but they most surely ate food and went about in the markets* (25:20). Thus, God described that it is the conduct of all prophets—and it is their divine manner—to mix with the people, and avoid seclusion, reservation and discrimination between people; because all behavior is repulsed by the nature. This was their manner with the people.

Prophetic Manners

Adam: An example of prophetic manners as they turn their faces to their Lord and pray to Him, is the prayer of Adam and his wife quoted by God: "*Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers.*" (7:23). This they said after they had eaten from the tree which God had forbidden them not to go near; of course, this prohibition was of advisory nature, not an order of a master to his servants; and their disobedience was not of a legislative command, they only went against an advice which was given to them in order to preserve the goodness of their condition; to maintain the felicity of their lives in the garden, safe from every type of infelicity and trouble. God had told them while cautioning them against following the Iblīs: *therefore let him not drive you both from the garden so that you should be unhappy: Surely it is* (ordained) *for you that you shall not be hungry therein nor bare of clothing; and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the heat of the sun* (20:117–9).

However, when they fell in the tribulation, and were overwhelmed by misfortune and the happiness of life departed from them, they were not occupied with themselves like someone who is despaired and hopeless, nor did pessimism cut off the rope that tied them to their Lord. Rather, they at once sought refuge with God Who owned all their affairs, and in Whose hand was every good that they hoped for themselves. So, they adhered to the attribute of His Divinity and Lordship—which contains all with which evil is repulsed and good attracted; the Lordship is the noble attribute, which joins the servant with God, the Glorified.

Then they both mentioned the evil which was threatening them with appearance of its signs, and it was the loss in life—It was as though they had bought the taste of eating for obedience to divine advice, and it became clear to them that their happiness was indeed about to fall down—and they described that they needed what would avert that evil from them. So they said: "*... and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers.*" That is: loss in life is threatening us and towers over us, and nothing can avert it except Your forgiving the sin committed by us, and then Your covering us with Your mercy and it is the happiness and felicity; because man, rather every being who is made, perceives by its created nature that the things which are found in the station of existence

and on the path of abiding are bound to seek perfection by removal of any defect or shortcoming attached to it, and the cause to complete that defect is God alone, so it is of the habit of divinity.

And for this reason, it was enough to only describe their condition, and to display the need and poverty that had afflicted the servant; and there was no need to ask for its remedy in words; rather, describing only their need was a most eloquent imploration and most fluent proposition.

And that is why Adam and his wife did not say clearly what they wanted; they did not say, 'so forgive us and have mercy on us'. As they had placed themselves in station of abasement and wretchedness because of the disobedience they had done, and now they felt that they had neither face nor any prestige, as a result of which their only course was the total and pure submission to whatever order was issued from the arena of divine power. Therefore, they stopped from all pleading and request—they just said that He was their Lord. In this way they pointed to what they hoped for and (before that, they) confessed to their injustice.

In this backdrop, the words: "*Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers.*" mean as follows: 'We did wrong by being unjust to ourselves; thus we were on the brink of the loss which was threatening our general felicity and bliss of life; now abasement and wretchedness have covered us from all sides and we are in intense need of erasing the brand of injustice so that we may be overwhelmed by divine mercy; and this has not left us with any face and dignity withwhich we could ask You; so here we are submitting to Your decision, O Mighty King! In Your hand are the command and the judgement; (our only salvation lies in the fact) that You are our Lord and we are under Your lordship, we hope from You what a ward hopes from his Guardian.'

Noah: Another example of their manners is what God quotes Noah concerning his prayer for his son: And it moved on with them amid waves like mountains; and Noah called out to his son, and he was aloof: "O my son! Embark with us and be not with the unbelievers." He said: "I will betake myself for refuge to a mountain that shall protect me from the water." And Noah cried out to his Lord and said: "My Lord! Surely my *son is of my family, and Thy promise is surely true, and Thou art the justest*

of the judges." He said: "O Noah! Surely he is not of your family; surely he is (the doer of) *other than good deeds, therefore ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge; surely I admonish you lest you may be of the ignorant." He said: "My Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from asking Thee that of which I have no knowledge; and if Thou shouldst not forgive me and have mercy on me, I should be of the losers."* (11:42–47)

Doubtlessly, it appears from the above talk of Noah that he wanted to pray for his son to be saved; but meditation of the verses of the story removes the curtain from the reality in another way:

On one side, God ordered him to embark on the ark with his family and the believers, saying: ...*Carry in it two of every thing, a pair, and your own family—except those against whom the word has already gone forth, and those who believe*... (11:40). Thus, God promised him to save his family and excepted those against whom the word had already gone forth; and his wife was a disbeliever, as God mentions in the verse 66:10. God sets forth an example of those who disbelieve the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. But as for his son, there was not any manifestation that he did not believe in the Call of Noah; and the report given by God, of his behavior with his father when he was aloof, shows only his disobedience to his father, rather than clear disbelief. Therefore, it was possible to think about him that he would be of the saved ones, because he was one of his sons and apparently was not a disbeliever; so he would be included in the divine promise of safety.

On the other side, God had revealed to Noah his decreed order about the people, as He says: *And it was revealed to Noah: That none of your people will believe except those who have already believed, therefore do not grieve at what they do; and make the ark before Our eyes and* (*according to*) *Our revelation, and do not speak to Me in respect of those who are unjust; surely they shall be drowned* (11:36–37). Does the clause: those who are unjust refer to those who disbelieved in his Call? Does it include every type of injustice? Or is it vague and ambiguous and needs explanation from the Speaker?

It appears that these were the factors, which put Noah in doubt about his son. Otherwise, he was not among those who would be oblivious of the position of his Lord; and he was one of the five *Ulu al-'Azm* messengers who are chiefs of the prophets; he was not the one to forget the divine revelation: "do not speak to Me in respect of those who are unjust; surely they shall be drowned"; nor was he to be pleased with the safety of his son

even if he was a disbeliever while he had said clearly in his prayer against his people: ... "*My Lord! Leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers*" (71:26). If he were to agree to it for his son, he would have agreed to it for his wife too.

That is why he did not dare to beseech God in clear terms; rather he put it forth like an enquiry, because he did not encompass all the factors that were there around his son. Therefore, he began by calling God with name of Lord, as it is the invocation of the needy beseecher. Then he said: "*surely my son is of my family*." He wanted to say that it decides in favor of the safety of my son: "*and Thou art the justest of the judges*"; there is no mistake in Thy command and no ambiguity in Thy order; so I do not know what is to be the end result of his affair.

Thus, Noah spoke with parental sentiment, as the word "cried out" indicates; yet he only mentioned the divine promise and did not add anything to it nor did he put forth any request.

Then the divine protection caught him up and cut short his speech. And God explained to him the true meaning of "your own family" in the promise, that it referred to only the doers of good from among his family, and this son was not good-doer, and God had earlier admonished him saying: *and do not speak to Me in respect of those who are unjust; surely they shall be drowned*. Noah had taken the apparent meaning of"family" and thought that the exception was of his unbeliever wife only. God then stopped him from asking that of which he had no knowledge, that is, the request of his son's safety—as it appeared that he was about to ask for it.

Now, he refrained from asking because of that divine intervention, and started a new talk that appears in the form of repentance but actually it is thank giving for bestowing on him this manner, which is certainly a favor. So he said: "*My Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from asking Thee that of which I have no knowledge.*" Thus he sought refuge in his Lord from what he was on verge of speaking, that is, the prayer for safety of his son when he did not know the reality of his condition.

The proof that till then he had not prayed any such thing, may be found in his words: "I seek refuge in Thee from asking." It should be noted that he had not said: I seek refuge in Thee from the question of what I had no knowledge of; as the *maṣdar* used as the first member of a genitive construction proves that the deed has already been done.

... ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge": Had he already asked for it, the prayer should have been rebutted by clear rejection, or by such admonition as: "Do not do like it again"; as we find similar modes in the Divine Book; for example: he said: "*My Lord! Show me* (*Thyself*), *so that I may look upon Thee." He said: "You can never see Me, ...*" (7:143). *When you received it with your tongues and spoke with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, Allah admonishes you that you should not return to the like of it ever again ...* (24:15–17).

Another prayer of Noah was the one quoted by God in these words: "*My Lord! Forgive me and my parents and he who enters my house believing, and the believing men and the believing women; and do not increase the unjust in aught but destruction.*" (71:28). God quotes this prayer of his after many verses describing his complaint in which he explains to his Lord his endeavours in calling his people day and night for nearly a thousand years of his life, what he endured of their hardships and what he suffered of the tribulations in the cause of God; he spent himself to the utmost limit and sacrificed himself in the way of their guidance, but his call to them did not cause them except fleeing, and his admonitions to them did not increase in them except arrogance.

He continued spreading among them his admonition and good sermons, and making them hear the truth and the reality; in the mean time, he was complaining to his Lord of their enmity and persistence with which they confronted him, and of their deception and trickery with which they opposed him. This continued until his feelings of sorrow were excited and the divine rage overwhelmed him, and he prayed against them, saying: "*My Lord! Leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers; for surely if Thou leave them they will lead astray Thy servants, and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful.*" (71:26–27)

What he says about their leading astray the servants of God if He left them in the land, is what he had said in the preceding verse: *And indeed they have led astray many*. They had already led astray many believers; so he was afraid that they would mislead the remaining ones. The words: *and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful*, declare that their loins and wombs have lost the ability to beget any believer. He described this news of the unseen through prophetic foresight and divine revelation.

When he cursed the disbelievers because of the divine rage which he

felt, and he was the noble prophet, the first to bring a book and a *sharīʿah*, and he had stood up to rescue the world from inundation of idolatry, but did not respond to him from the human society save a few—about eighty persons, according to traditions—thus it was a manner of this situation that he should not forget those who believed in his Lord and should pray for them of good up to the Day of Resurrection.

So he said: "*My Lord! Forgive me*": He began with his own self, because the talk was of seeking forgiveness for those who tread on His path, so he is in the forefront of them and is their Leader. "*and my parents*": This is the proof that they were believers. "*and him who enters my house believing*": They were those of his contemporaries who had believed in him. "*and the believing men and the believing women*": It refers to all believers, the people of monotheism, because all of them were his people, and were obliged to him up to the Day of Resurrection; he was the first who raised the call of religion in the world with the book and the *sharīʿah*, and kept the standard of monotheism aloft among the people. That is why God has greeted him with his best greeting when He says: *Peace be upon Noah among the nations* (37:79). So peace and greetings be on him, the noble prophet, whenever believed in God any believer or performed any good deed for Him, and whenever any name was mentioned for God, honored be His name! and whenever there was any trace of good and felicity among the people; because all this is from the blessings of his call and the appendant of his rising. May God bless him and all the prophets and messengers together!

Abraham: Another example was shown by Abraham as quoted by God describing his argumentation with his community: *He said:* "*Have you then considered what you have been worshipping, you and your ancient sires? Surely they are enemies to me, but not* (so) *the Lord of the worlds, Who created me, then He has shown me the way, and He Who gives me to eat and gives me to drink, and when I am sick, then He restores me to health, and He Who will cause me to die, then give me life, and Who, I hope, will forgive me my mistakes on the Day of Judgement. My Lord! Grant me wisdom, and join me with the good, and ordain for me a goodly mention among posterity, and make me of the heirs of the garden of bliss, and forgive my father, for surely he is of those who have gone astray, and disgrace me not on the day when they are raised.*" (26:75–87)

It was an invocation, which he began by praying for himself and for his father because of a promise that he had given him. It was in the beginning of his mission when he had not lost the hope that his father would become a believer; but when it became clear that he was an enemy of God, he washed his hand of him.

He began this prayer with praising his Lord beautifully, as the manner of servitude demands. This is the first detailed praise that God has quoted from him. What has been quoted before is not of this kind, like his words: "*O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up* (with God). *Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth,*" (6:79–80). "*I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; surely He is ever Affectionate to me.*" (19:47).

Abraham has used best manner in God's praise, in that he has put forward a comprehensive praise, which describes his Lord's care and attention to him from beginning of his creation until he shall return to Him; and has set himself in the station of total neediness and poverty; and has not mentioned for his Lord except absolute Self-sufficiency and pure magnanimity. He has represented himself as an abased servant, who has no power over anything, and the divine power turns him over from one condition to another; creation, then giving food and drink, then restoration of health, then causing to die, then giving life, then leading to the recompense of the Day of Judgement; while he has nothing except simple obedience and hoping for forgiveness of mistakes.

And look at the manner, which he has maintained in the above speech. He ascribes sickness to himself in the sentence: "*and when I am sick, then He restores me to health*"; he did so because its ascription to God in this place—and it is the place of praise—would not be free from incongruity. Although sickness is an event, a happening, and as such it is not devoid of its ascription to God; but the talk here is not about its happening (so that it would be ascribed to God), but it aims at declaring that restoration to health after sickness is from His mercy and care. That is why he attributed sickness to himself and restoration of health to his Lord, claiming that nothing proceeds from Him except what is beautiful.

Then he used the same fine manner in the prayer, which he began with the name: *Lord!* and he confined his request to the real and abiding blessings, without looking at the adornments of this transient world; and

selected from within that field what was the biggest and greatest. So, he asked for wisdom (regulation) and it is *sharīʿah*, and for being joined with the good people, then asked that God should ordain for him a goodly mention among posterity. It means that God should send and raise after him time after time some prophets or messengers who will hold up his call and propagate his *sharīʿah*. Actually, it is a request that God should distinguish him with a *sharīʿah* that would abide up to the Day of Resurrection; thereafter he asked for inheritance of the paradise, forgiveness for his father and not to disgrace him on the Day of Resurrection.

God positively answered all his requests, as His speech shows, except his prayer for his father (about which the divine speech is silent). But far be it from the Lord of the worlds to mention a prayer of one of His honored servants which would have gone in vain and remained unanswered. God says: *... the faith of your father Abraham; ...* (22: 78); *And he made it a word to continue in his posterity ...* (43:28); *... and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter, he is most surely among the righteous.* (2:130); and He greeted him with a comprehensive greeting: *Peace be on Abraham.* (37:109).

Study of history after Abraham confirms all that the glorious Qur'an has mentioned of his commendable acts and praised him for them. He was the noble prophet who stood alone with the religion of monotheism to revive the natural religion and rose for demolition of the pillars of idolatry and breaking of the idols; and this was at a time when the signs of monotheism were obliterated, and the passage of time had effaced the sketches of prophethood; the world had forgotten the names of Noah and other honored prophets. So, he made the natural religion stand up, and spread the religion of monotheism among the people. The monotheistic religion until now—and about four thousand years have gone by since his time—is enduring in his progeny. What the world knows of the religion of monotheism is the religion of the Jews and their prophet is Moses, and the religion of the Christians and their prophet is Jesus, and they both were from the progeny of Israel (Jacob), son of Isaac, son of Abraham (peace be upon them); and the religion of Islam which was brought by Muḥammad and he was from the progeny of Ishmael son of Abraham (peace be upon both).

And among his prayer mentioned by God is his speech: "*My Lord! Grant me of the doers of good deeds.*" (37:100). He asks God for a good

offspring; in this affair he adheres to his Lord, and regularizes his request (which is in a way of this world's benefit) by attaching to it the attribute of doing good, in order that it turns towards God and His pleasure.

Also, among his beseeching was what he prayed when he arrived at the land of Mecca and had settled Ishmael and his mother therein. God says: *And when Abraham said: "My Lord! Make it a secure town and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day." He said: "And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will drive him to the chastisement of the Fire; and it is an evil destination."* (2:126).

He asks his Lord to make the land of Mecca—and at that time it was a desolate tract, a valley without any agriculture—a sanctuary for himself, in order to preserve through it the religion, and it may be a sort of earthly and bodily connection between the people and their Lord, to which they would proceed for worshipping their Lord, and turn towards it in their rituals; and would maintain its sanctity among themselves. So it would be an enduring sign of God on the earth, whoever remembers it will remember God, whoever proceeds to it, will proceed to Him; with it direction will be pinpointed, and the word united.

The proof that he intends with "security," a legislative security (which is the meaning of making it a secure town), and not the physical peace and safety from the battles, wars and many other events which disturb the peace and order, and destroy the people's well-being, may be found in the divine words: *What! Have We not settled them in a safe, sacred territory to which fruits of every kind are drawn?* (28:57).

In this verse, God shows His great favor to them that He has made the sacred territory a place of safety for them; it is a place which God has attached to Himself; and it is described as a safe place because the people pay respect to it, not because of any creative factor which would protect it from disturbance and murder. The verse was revealed and before that Mecca had witnessed annihilative wars between the Quraysh and the Jurhum; and likewise it had seen innumerable murders, tyranny and depravity. The same is the connotation of the divine word: *Do they not see that We have made a sacred territory secure, while men are carried off by force from around them?* ... (29:67). That is, these people are not carried off from this sacred territory as the people respect it because of the sanctity We gave to it.

In short, his aim was that there should be for God a sanctuary in the land, which his offspring were to settle in; and this could not be achieved except by building a town which the people would proceed to from every direction; so it would be a religious gathering place where they would arrive for settlement, refuge and pilgrimage up to the Day of Resurrection. That is why he prayed that God should make it a secure town; and it was without any greenery, so he prayed that God should give them sustenance from the fruits, in order that it should become inhabited by its residents and they should not go away from it.

Then, when he felt that his prayer for such honor includes believers and unbelievers both, he attached to it the proviso of belief in God and the hereafter, and said: " *... such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day.*" As for that: how will it be possible in a town inhabited by believers and unbelievers together, and they are at variance; or if it is inhabited by unbelievers only; or how will they be sustained with fruits while the land is plain and uncultivated, such questions did not occur to his mind.

In fact, it was a good manner of Abraham in his position of a beseecher. It would be a waste of word for a beseecher to teach his Lord as to how his request be fulfilled; or, what is the way to comply with his request; while He is the Lord, All-Knowing, Wise, All-Powerful; His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it, 'Be', so it is.

However, God wanted to fulfil his need according to the usual system of normal causality, and in this there is no differentiation between a believer and an unbeliever. Therefore, God completed his prayer by adding a restriction in His speech: "*And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will drive him to the chastisement of the Fire; and it is an evil destination.*"

This prayer which led to the legislation of the divine sanctuary; also the construction of the holy Ka'bah, which was the first house appointed for men, the one at Bakkah, blessed and a guidance for the nations, was one of the fruits of his holy sublime endeavour, with which he has put all the Muslims under his obligation up to the Day of Resurrection.

Another of his invocations was the one he prayed in the later part of his life and which God describes in the following words: *And when Abraham said: "My Lord! Make this city secure, and save me and my sons from worshipping idols: My Lord! Surely they have led many people astray;*

then whoever follows me, he is surely of me, and who-ever disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful: O our Lord! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley devoid of agriculture, near Thy Sacred House, our Lord! That they may keep up prayer; therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits; haply they may be grateful: O our Lord! Surely Thou knowest what we hide and what we make public, and nothing in the earth nor anything in heaven is hidden from Allah; Praise be to Allah, Who has given me in old age Ishmael and Isaac; most surely my Lord is the Hearer of prayer; My Lord! Make me keep up prayer and from my offspring (too)*, O our Lord! Grant me forgive-ness and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass!*" (14:35–41).

This he had prayed in his later days when the town of Mecca was already built. See for proof, his words: "*Praise be to Allah, Who has given me in old age Ishmael and Isaac*"; and the word: "*make this city secure*." (Note that he did not say as before: "*make it a secure town*"—2:126)

His decency is noticed by his adhering to the Divinity throughout his prayers. Whenever he asks for something as reserved to his own self, he says: "My Lord!" and whenever he mentions a thing which he shares with others, he says: "Our Lord!"

Another etiquette is reflected in these prayers, in that whenever he asks for something which could be used for lawful as well as unlawful purpose, he clearly mentions his correct and lawful purpose; this gives rise to the divine mercy, as is very clear. When he said: "*save me and my sons ...*," he followed it by saying: "*Surely they have led many people astray*"; and when he said: "*O our Lord! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring ...*," he said: "*our Lord! That they may keep up prayer*"; and when he prayed: ". *make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits;* he ended it with the hope: *haply they may be grateful*."

Also, it was an example of his manner that he mentioned, at the end of every need, an appropriate good name of God, like: the Forgiving, the Merciful, the Hearer of prayer; and repeated the name: 'Lord', whenever he mentioned any of his needs, because the Lordship is the rope which links the servant and the Lord, and it is the key of the door of every prayer.

His manner is also seen in his speech: "*and whoever disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful*," inasmuch as he did not curse them with any untoward thing; rather he mentioned when speaking about them two

of the divine names which are the means of conveying happiness to every man, that is, Forgiving, Merciful, in his desire for rescuing his people and spreading the magnanimity of his Lord.

Abraham & Ishmael: Another example is found in what God has quoted from him and his son Ishmael—and they had jointly said it: *And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House: "Our Lord! Accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing; Our Lord! And make us both submissive to Thee and* (raise) *from our off-spring a nation submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us* (mercifully)*, surely Thou art the Oft-returning* (to mercy)*, the Merciful. Our Lord! And raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy signs and teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise."* (2:127–129)

It was their prayer when they were building the Ka'bah, and this too, like the preceding prayers, contains beautiful manners.

Similar manners are seen in Ishmael's talk during the story of the slaughter, which God describes as follows: *So We gave him the good news of a boy, possessing forbearance. And when he attained to working with him, he said: "O my son! Surely I see in dream that I am sacrificing you; consider then what you see." He said: "O my father! Do what you are commanded; if Allah please, you will find me of the patient ones"* (37:101–102).

At the beginning of this talk, shows Ishmael's manner with his father, but later parts show his attitude between him and his Lord. Moreover, showing respect to a messenger like Abraham, 'The Friend of God," is showing respect to God Himself, the Sublime.

In short, when his father told him of what he had seen in the dream (and it was a divine command as is proved by Ishmael's words: "*do what your are commanded*"), he ordered him to consider what was his opinion. This was his manner with his son. Ishmael said to him: "*O my father! Do what you are commanded; if Allah please, you will find me of the patient ones.*" He did not say that it was his opinion, in order to show his humility *vis-à-vis* his father, as though he has no opinion of his own in presence of his father's. That is why he began the talk addressing him with the attribute of fatherhood; he did not say. Do it if you want it; he did so to please his father; and he said during it that it was a divine command given to

Abraham, and it is unimaginable for the one like him to hesitate or think twice about such a command without complying with it.

Also, his words: "*if Allah please, you will find me of the patient ones.*" is another endeavour to please his father. All this shows his good manners with his father.

And with his Lord he showed his manners, when he did not present his opinion or decision in a definite way; rather he attached it to the pleasure of God; it is because definitely expressing a view without attaching it to the pleasure of God indicates a claim of independent causality, and far removed from it is the arena of prophethood. And God has condemned a group who decided an affair without attaching it to the pleasure of God, as He has said in the story of the owners of the garden: *Surely We tried them as We had tried the owners of the garden, when they swore that they would certainly cut off the produce in the morning, and they did not say, God willing* (68: 17–18). Also, God had taught His prophet in His Book to say: 'God willing', with an amazing allusion, when He said: *And do not say of anything: 'Surely I will do it tomorrow,' unless Allah pleases; ...* (18:23–24)

Jacob: Another example of this manner is seen in the narrative givenby God of Jacob's expression when his sons had returned from Egypt leaving there Benjamin and Yahuda. God says: *And he turned away from them, and said: "O my sorrow for Joseph!" And his eyes became white on account of grief, and he was a repressor* (of grief). *They said: "By Allah! You will not cease to remember Joseph until you are a prey to constant disease or* (until) *you are of those who perish." He said: "I only complain of my grief and sorrow to Allah, and I know from Allah what you do not know."* (12:84–86)

He says to his sons that my constant remembering of Joseph means that I complain my wretched condition to God; and I have not despaired of the mercy of my Lord that He will return him to me unexpectedly; he said it because it is a manner of the prophets *vis-à-vis* their Lord that they turn to Him in all their conditions, and direct all their movements and their stillness into His way, for God has clearly said that He has guided them to it on a straight path. He says: *These are they whom Allah guided, ...* (6:90); and He says especially about Jacob: *And We gave to him* (Abraham) *Isaac and Jacob; each did we guide, ...* (6:84). Then He has said that following desire is going astray from the way of God: *... and do not follow desire, lest*

it should lead you astray from the way of Allah; ... (38:26).

Thus, the prophets—who are rightly guided by the guidance of God—do not follow desire at all. Their psychological feelings and inner inclinations—desire or anger, love or hate, happiness or sorrow for what is related to appearances of life, such as wealth, sons, marriage, food, dress, abode and so on—all this occurs in the way of God; they do not intend from these except God, Great is His Majesty! There are two ways, which are trodden, a way in which truth is followed, and another in which desire is followed. Or you may say: The way of God's remembrance, and the way of forgetting Him.

As the prophets (peace be upon them) were guided to God and did not follow desire, they constantly remembered God, they did not intend with movement or stillness other than God, the High; nor did they knock for any need of their life any door of any cause other than His door. We mean to say that when they attached themselves to a cause, it did not make them forget their Lord, nor were they oblivious of the fact that all affairs are in His hand. It does not mean that they absolutely rebut the cause in such a way that it loses its existence in mind also, because this cannot be done. Nor is it that they look at the things and remove from them their attribute of causality, because it would cause going against the human nature. Rather it means that man does not see any independence in anything other than God, and puts everything in its place where God has placed it.

When the condition of the prophets was as we have described above that they totally adhere to Him, then this divine manner enabled them to watch the position of their Lord and properly attach themselves to His divinity; thus they aim at nothing except God, and do not leave anything except for pleasure of God; they do not adhere with any cause without adhering with their Lord before it and with it and after it; so He is their destination in all conditions.

Jacob's speech: "*I only complain of my grief and sorrow to Allah*," aims at explaining that 'my constantly remembering Joseph and my sorrow for him is not like you people that when one of you is inflicted by a misfortune and loses one of the favors of God, he begins talking about it before someone who owns neither benefit nor harm, all this because of his ignorance; rather I address my complaint to God because of the grief I feel for disappearance of Joseph; and it is not a request from me for something which

is not to be, for '*I know from Allah what you do not know*.'

Joseph: Another example is that which God quotes Joseph, The Truthful, as saying when the wife of 'Azīz threatened him with imprisonment if he did not do what she was telling him to do: *He said: "My Lord! The prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me; and if Thou turn not away their device from me, I will yearn towards them and become* (*one*) *of the ignorant*" (12:33).

He describes to his Lord that he now has only two alternatives in facing these women, prison or accepting what they were asking him to do; and he because of his knowledge which God has honored him with—and it is mentioned in the divine words: *And when he had attained maturity, We gave him wisdom and knowledge; ...* (12:22)—chooses prison in preference to accepting their demand; but the causes are pressing in favor of their desire and are threatening him to ignore the position of his Lord and nullify the knowledge he has got from God; and there is no decision in all this except for God; as he said to his fellow prisoner: "*... judgement is only Allah's*" (12:40). That is why he maintained good manners and did not mention any need of himself, because that is a sort of judgement. He rather alluded to the threat of ignorance by nullification of the favor of knowledge with which his Lord had honored him. He, also mentioned that his safety from the danger of ignorance and repulsion of their devices depended on its averting by God; thus he surrendered the whole affair to God and became silent.

Then his Lord accepted his (unspoken) prayer, and removed their device from him—and it was either sensual passion or prison, and God protected him from both. It is understood from it that their device refersto the desire and the prison together. As for his word: "*My Lord! The prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me;*" it shows his inclination in case the matter remained suspended between the two; it is an allusion to his hate and hatred of indecency; it was not a prayer for imprisonment, as (Imām Ḥusayn) had said:

Death is better than boarding a disgrace,
And disgrace is better than entering the Fire.

It was not as some people think that Joseph had prayed for imprisonment, so it was decided accordingly. The proof of what we have said is found in the following divine words: *Then it occurred to them after they*

had seen the signs that they should imprison him till a time (12:35). This verse clearly says that his imprisonment happened because of an opinion which occurred to them afterwards, and God had already averted from him their device that is, their temptation to themselves and the threat of imprisonment.

One more example of Joseph's manner is seen in his praise of, and prayer from, God, as He says: *Then when they came in to Joseph, he took his parents to lodge with him and said: "Enter safe into Egypt, if Allah please." And he raised his parents upon the throne and they fell down in prostration before him, and he said: "O my father! This is the interpretation of my vision of old; my Lord has indeed made it to be true; and He was indeed kind to me when He brought me forth from the prison and brought you from the desert after that the Satan had sown dissensions between me and my brothers, surely my Lord is benignant to whom He pleases; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise. My Lord! Thou hast given me of the kingdom and taught me of the interpretation of sayings: Originator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my guardian in this world and the hereafter, make me die a Muslim and join me with the good*" (12:99–101).

A scholar should contemplate on the prophetic manner appearing from these verses. Just imagine the kingdom and absolute authority which Joseph was enjoying and how eagerly his parents yearned to visit him, and how much humility his brothers felt towards him, and all of the parties fully remembered his life history since they had lost him till they found him while he was the overlord of Egypt, settled on the throne of power and authority.

And then see that he never opened his month for a talk but there was a part of it, or the full talk, reserved for his Lord, except the opening clause when he told them to: "*Enter safe into Egypt, if Allah please.*" So he asked them to enter and declared their safety, but at once attached it to the pleasure of God, lest somebody think that he was independent in this judgement, besides God; while it was he who had earlier said: "*judgement is only Allah's*."

Then he began praising his Lord for all that had passed on him since he had separated from them until he was gathered together with them. He started with the story of his vision and realization of its interpretation; and he affirmed in it the truthfulness of his father, not in his interpretation only,

but even in what he had mentioned in the end of his talk regarding God's knowledge and wisdom, penetrating deeply in the praise of his Lord, as his father had told him (in the beginning). *And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of sayings and surely your Lord is Knowing, Wise.* (12:6), and Joseph now tells his father: "*O my father! This is the interpretation of my vision of old; ... surely my Lord is benignant to whom He pleases; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise*" (12:100).

Then he pointed briefly to what had passed over him between his vision and appearance of its interpretation, and ascribed it to his Lord describing it as good—and it was beneficence from God. It was a very fine manner that he indicated to all that he suffered from his brothers from the time they threw him in the pit till they sold him for a very low price of a few dirhams and accused him of theft, in a short sentence: *the Satan had sown dissensions between me and my brothers* (12:100). And he continued mentioning the bounties of his Lord and praising Him, saying: "My Lord! My Lord!" until he was overwhelmed by the love and overcome by the divine attraction, and he became totally occupied with his Lord and left them as if he did not recognize them; and said: "*My Lord! Thou has given me of the kingdom and taught me of the interpretation of sayings.*" In this way, he praised his Lord for His bounties, which were with him, that is, kingdom and knowledge of the interpretation of sayings. Then his noble self moved from the remembrance of the bounties to the fact that his Lord who bestowed on him what He bestowed did it all because He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth who has brought forth all things from total non-existence to existence, without their being any novelty for anything on its own with which it could possess any harm or benefit, felicity or infelicity or any ability to manage any affair of itself in this world or in the hereafter.

And because He is the Originator of everything, He is the Guardian of everything. That is why he said after the clause: "*Originator of the heavens and the earth!*" that he is a humble servant, he does not own management of his self in the world or in the hereafter; rather he is under the guardianship and control of God, Who chooses for him of the good what He pleases and places him in any position He wishes. So he said: "*Thou art my guardian in this world and the hereafter,*" at this juncture he mentioned what he needed from his Lord, that is, he should go from this world to the

hereafter while he is in the state of submission to his Lord to the extent that God had bestowed it on his fathers, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob. God says: *... and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely among the righteous. When his Lord said to him: "Submit (yourself)," he said: "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds." And the same did Abraham enjoin on his sons and so (did) Jacob. "O my sons! Surely Allah has chosen for you (this) faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims"* (2:130–132).

To this refers Joseph in his prayer: *... make me die a Muslim and join me with the good* (12:101). He prays for death on Islam and then to be joined with good servants. It was the same, which his great grandfather Abraham had asked for when he said: "*My Lord! Grant me wisdom, and join me with the good*" (26:83). So, it was positively answered as seen in the previously mentioned verses. And on this note God has ended his story; *and most surely to your Lord is the destination* (53:42). This is an extremely delicate grace of the Qur'anic contexts.

Moses: Among the prophetic manners is what God describes about His prophet Moses during his early days in Egypt, when he struck a Coptic and killed him. *He said: "My Lord! Surely I have done harm to myself, so do forgive me." So He forgave him; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.* (28:16).

Another example is his prayer when he fled from Egypt, reached Madyan and watered the sheep of the daughters of Shu'ayb and retired to the shade: Then he said: "*My Lord! Surely I stand in need of what-ever good Thou mayest send down to me*" (28:24).

Moses in both his prayers has observed the manner, after taking refuge with God and adherence to His divinity, in that he, in the first prayer, clearly mentioned what he needed, because it was concerned with forgiveness, and God loves to be asked for forgiveness, as He has said: *... and ask the forgiveness of Allah; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.* (2:199); and it was the factor to which Noah and the prophets coming after him had been calling the people. But he did not pinpoint his need in the second prayer by which, as the context apparently shows, he wanted to fulfil his needs of life like food, accommodation, for example; he showed his neediness and then was silent; after all what respect has got this world in the eyes of God?

You should know that Moses's words: "*My Lord! Surely I have done injustice to myself, so do Thou forgive me*," runs in confessing to have committed injustice and asking for forgiveness, parallel to the prayer of Adam and his wife, when they said: "*Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers*" (7:23). The injustice here means injustice against his own self, because he had done a deed that was against the welfare of his life, in the same way as it was in case of Adam and his wife.

Certainly, Moses did what he did before God had sent him with His *sharīʿah* which forbade slaying a man; moreover, he had slain only an unbeliever whose life was not respectable; and there is no proof that such a killing was forbidden before his *sharīʿah*. And the same was the situation regarding the disobedience of Adam and his wife; they had indeed done harm to their own selves by eating from the tree, before God had laid down any *sharīʿah* for human beings—God had established *sharīʿah*—whatever it might be—after they had come down from the garden to the earth.

Mere prohibition of going near the tree does not prove that it was an authoritative order whose disobedience entails sin (in terms of *fiqh*); rather there are associations to show that the prohibition was of advisory nature, as appears from the verses of the chapter "Ṭā Hā," and we have explained in the story of Adam's garden, in the first volume of the book.

As for Moses, the Divine Book clearly says that he was a purified servant; and that Iblīs cannot seduce the purified servants of God, the High; and it is evidently known that sin cannot occur without misleading of Iblīs. God says: *And mention Moses in the Book; surely he was one purified, and he was a messenger, a prophet*. (19:51); *He said:* "*Then by Thy might I will surely seduce them all, except Thy servants from among them, the purified ones*" (38:82–83).

It appears from the above that the forgiveness, for which he had prayed, like the prayer of Adam and his wife, does not mean wiping off the chastisement which God writes for the sinners—as is the case with disobedience of authoritative commands; rather it means erasure of evil consequences which come in the wake of doing harm to oneself in the course of life. In fact, Moses was afraid lest his affair be known to them and they recognize what they would consider as his sin. So, he asked his Lord that He should cover for him and forgive him; and "forgiveness" in the Qur'anic language

is more general than wiping off the chastisement, it is rather wiping off the evil consequences whatever they might be. And there is no doubt that the authority of this all is in the hand of God.

In a way, similar to it is the earlier mentioned prayer of Noah: "... *and if Thou shouldst not forgive me and have mercy on me, I should be of the losers.*" (11:47), that is, if Thou didst not teach me Thy manners, and didst not protect me by Thy protection and safety, and didst not have mercy on me in this way, I should be of the losers. Understand it.

Another example is Moses's prayer when revelation was sent to him for the first time and he was given the message to convey to his people as God has quoted: *He said: "O my Lord! Expand my breast for me; and make my affair easy for me; and loose the knot from my tongue;* (that) *they may understand my word; and give to me an aider from my family; Aaron, my brother; strengthen my back by him; and associate him* (with me) *in my affair; so that we should glorify Thee much; and remember Thee oft; surely, Thou art seeing us*" (20:25–35).

He seriously thinks over the religious mission of which he has been given responsibility, and says to his Lord—as is inferred from the words with help of the context—that surely Thou art seeing my and my brother's condition; that we, since our early life, love Thy glorification; tonight Thou hast burdened me with the load of messengership, and I feel that I am hot tempered and that there is knot in my tongue—the factors which Thou knowest better; and I fear that they would accuse me of falsehood if I called them to Thee and conveyed Thy message to them; then I shall be angry and my tongue will not work; therefore *expand my breast for me and make my affairs easy for me*." This is the removal of harm which God mentions in His speech: *There is no harm in the Prophet doing that which Allah has ordained for him;* (such has been) *the course of Allah with respect of those who have gone before; ...* (33:38); *and loose the knot from my tongue* (that) *they may understand my word*; and my brother Aaron's tongue is more eloquent than mine, and he is *from my family*, so associate him with me in this affair and make him my helper, *so that we should glorify Thee much*, as we loved to do so, and should *remember Thee often* before the gatherings of the people helping each other." This is the gist of what he asked his Lord for, from among the equipment of the mission and conveying. The manner which he has used here is that he clearly mentioned the aim

and objective of his asking, lest it might be thought that he was asking all this for his own self; so he said: "*so that we should glorify Thee much, and remember Thee oft.*" And he offered in proof of his claim's truth, the knowledge of God Himself, by throwing their selves before Him and submitting themselves to Him; so he said: "*surely, Thou art seeing us.*" And when the needy beseecher throws himself in his need before the wealthy and magnanimous beseeched one, it becomes the mightiest factor in inciting the feeling of mercy, because it displays the need more clearly than its verbal description could do—after all, it is not impossible for the tongue to tell lie.

Another example is when Moses prayed against Pharaoh and his chiefs, as he said: *And Moses said: "Our Lord! Surely Thou hast given to Pharaoh and his chiefs finery and riches in this world's life, to this end, our Lord, that they lead* (people) *astray from Thy way: Our Lord! Destroy their riches and harden their hearts so that they believe not until they see the painful punishment." He said: "The prayer of you both has indeed been accepted, therefore continue in the right way and do not follow the path of those who do not know*" (10:88–89).

The prayer was jointly of Moses and Aaron; that is why it began with the word: "*Our Lord!*" and it is proved by the next verse, He said: "*The prayer of you both has indeed been accepted.*" They first cursed their riches that it should be destroyed; then they invoked God against them that He should harden their hearts so that they would not believe until they saw the painful chastisement, in order that their faith would not be accepted, as God says: *On the day when some of the signs of your Lord shall come, its faith shall not profit a soul which did not believe before, or earn good through its faith* (6:158).

That is, take revenge from them by forbidding the faith to them through suddenly inflicting punishment on them as they had deprived Thy servants of it by leading them astray. This was the hardest possible curse, which could be inflicted on anyone, because it is the curse for everlasting infelicity, and nothing is more evil than that for a man.

Curse, or prayer for evil, is different from prayer for good, because the divine mercy is ahead of His wrath; God had revealed to Moses: "(As for) *My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, and My mercy encompasses all things; ...*" (7:156). Thus, the all-encompassing nature of the divine mercy dislikes inflicting harm or loss to any of His servants even if

he is unjust. Its proof is seen in the divine bounties on them, in His covering them with His magnanimity; and in His ordering His servants for forbearance, and in His patience on their ignorance and stupidity—except in establishing an important right or in emergency in inequity when they are fully aware that a necessary underlying reason, like that of religion or people of religion demands it.

Apart from that, the more delicate and subtle the aspects of good and bliss; the more adhering it would be to the souls, by the nature on which

God has created people—contrary to the aspects of evil and infelicity; because man by his nature flees from knowing it, and tries not to pay attention to its root, let alone its particulars. This factor causes difference in manner between the two types of prayers, that is, of good and of evil.

Thus, it is among the manners of prayer for evil that affairs leading to that prayer should be mentioned obliquely, and particularly about the ugly and detestable matters, contrary to the prayer for the good, because clearly mentioning such prayer factors is desirable. Moses has kept it in mind when he said: "*that they lead* (people) *astray from Thy way,*" and did not give the details of the oppressions being inflicted by the people of Pharaoh.

Among its manners is augmentation of entreaty and supplication; and he did so by saying: "*Our Lord!*" and repeating it several times in such a short prayer.

Another manner is that a man should not pray for evil about someone except when he knows that it is in the interest of truth for religion or its people—without basing it on imagination or accusation. And Moses had full knowledge of it, and God has said about Pharaoh: *And truly We showed him Our signs, all of them, but he rejected and refused.* (20:56). Probably, it is for this reason that God ordered Moses and his brother when He informed them of the acceptance of their prayer: "*therefore continue in the right way and do not follow the path of those who do not know*" (10:89). And God knows better.

Another prayer of Moses was the one quoted by God in the following verses: *And Moses chose out of his people seventy men for Our appointment; so when the earthquake overtook them, he said: "My Lord! If Thou hadst pleased, Thou hadst destroyed them before and myself* (100)*; wilt Thou destroy us for what the fools among us have done? It is not but Thy trial, Thou makest err with it whom Thou pleasest and guidest whom Thou*

pleasest; Thou art our Guardian, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us, and Thou art the best of the forgivers. And ordain for us good in this world's life and in the hereafter, for surely we turn to Thee" (7:155–156).

The actual prayer begins with the words: "*therefore forgive us*"; however it was an extremely hard situation, as they were inflicted by divine wrath and violent attack which nothing can stand against; and asking for forgiveness and mercy from an angry master whose mastership has been debased and insulted, is not like asking for it from a master who is in normal condition. That is why Moses offered before that what would calm down the flare up of the divine wrath, in order that he could then proceed to the asking for forgiveness and mercy.

Thus he said: "*My Lord! If Thou hadst pleased, Thou hadst destroyed them before and myself* (*too*)." He wants to say, as the context shows: 'My Lord! Surely my soul and their souls all together are in Thy hand, and submissive to Thy pleasure; if Thou hast pleased, Thou wouldst have destroyed them and myself too before today, as Thou hast destroyed them and kept me alive today. Now, what shall I say to my people when I shall go back to them and they would accuse me of murdering all of them, and Thou knowest the condition of my people better than I do; this would nullify my mission and all my endeavours would be forfeited.'

Then he counted the destruction of the seventy as the destruction of himself and his people; and mentioned that those were the fools of his community and no importance should be attached to their deeds. Thus, he incited his Lord's mercy, as it was not His custom to destroy a community because of the deeds of some fools among them. It was but an example of the general test and trial which is always prevalent in human beings, and are led astray by it many, and are guided aright by it many, and Thou hast not dealt with them except by forgiveness and covering.

As in Thy hand is the authority of my soul and our souls, Thou canst destroy us whenever Thou pleasest; and this event is not something unique in the way of Thy general trial which results in going astray of one group and being guided aright of another, and all this does not end except at Thy pleasure; therefore Thou art our Guardian, by thine order and pleasure stands management of our affairs, and we have nothing to do with it; so judge Thou about us with forgiveness and mercy; among Thy attributes is that Thou art the best of forgivers; ordain for us in this world a life secure

from punishment, and it is the one that is liked by him who is overwhelmed by the divine wrath, and in the life hereafter the good by forgiveness and the garden.

This was the style used by him in his prayer, when had taken up his people the earthquake and covered them the misfortune. See how did he use the beautiful homage of servitude, and sought, through it, his Lord's mercy. He continued beseeching the mercy and calming down with his praises the outburst of divine wrath until he got the response which he had not mentioned in words, at all, and it was their renaissance after the destruction, and the revelation came to him as God says: *He said:* "(*As for*) *My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, and My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it for those who guard* (*against evil*) *and pay the zakāt, and those who believe in Our signs*" (7:156). Now, what do you think about Him after He said to Moses in answer to his prayer: *and My mercy encompasses all things*?

God mentions that He had clearly forgiven them and accepted the prayer of Moses by returning them to life when they had been destroyed; and bringing them back to this world, as He says: *And when you said:* "*O Moses! We will not believe in you until we see Allah manifestly,*" *so the punishment overtook you while you looked on. Then We raised you up after your death that you may give thanks* (2:55–56). The report in the chapter of "Women" (4:153) is nearer to it.

Moses demonstrated respect in his speech by saying, "*Thou makest err with it whom Thou pleasest*." He deliberately refrained from attributing the misguidance to the wrong choices of those who strayed, opting instead to verbally emphasize God's transcendence beyond human attributes, as he believed in his heart. This approach mirrors the divine phrasing: "*He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright by it; but He does not cause to err by it* (*any*) *except the transgressors*" (2:26). Moses adopted this manner of speaking because the context required focusing solely on the reality of God as the ultimate Guardian, the endpoint of all governance and authority.

And in all this talk he did not mention the main issue which was in his heart, that is, the prayer that God should give them back their lives after destroying them, because the situation with all its fright and danger prevented him from elaboration; he merely pointed to it briefly by saying: "*My Lord! If Thou hadst pleased, Thou hadst destroyed them before and*

myself (too) ..."

Also, among his invocations is that which he prayed when he returned to his people from the meeting point and found that they had begun calf-worship after him; and God had informed him of that misdeed, as He says: *And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by the head, dragging him towards him. He said: "Son of my mother! Surely the people reckoned me weak and had well-nigh slain me, therefore make not the enemies to rejoice over me and count me not among the unjust people*" (7:150). Then Moses became soft towards him and prayed for him and for himself, so they should be distinguished from the unjust people. *He said: "My Lord! Forgive me and my brother, cause us to enter into Thy mercy, and Thou art the most Merciful of the merciful ones*" (7:151). Why did he want to be distinguished from the other people, and that God should enter both of them in His mercy? It was only because he knew that the divine wrath was surely to overtake them because of their injustice, as God describes it after the above verse: (As for) *those who took the calf* (for a god), *surely wrath from their Lord and disgrace in this world's life shall overtake them, ...* (7:52). The preceding explanation will show the way of good manners in his talk.

Another of his prayers—and it is in effect a curse against his people who had said when he ordered them to enter the holy land: *They said: "O Moses! We shall never enter it at all so long as they remain therein; go therefore you and your Lord then fight you both, surely we will here sit down."* (5:24);—is that which God narrates in his words: *He said: "My Lord! Surely I have no control* (upon any) *but my own self and my brother; therefore make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors*" (5:25).

He used fine manners when he alluded to his intention of stopping to tell them and to convey to them the commands of their Lord again—after they rejected his first command in such an ugly and rude way—by his saying: "*My Lord! Surely I have no control* (upon any) *but my own self and my brother;*" that is,: 'no one obeys my orders except I and my brother; these people have rebutted my order in such a way that now there is no hope about them; so now I desist from telling them Thy commands and guiding them to what contains their community's welfare.'

The verb translated here: "*I have no control*," actually means, 'I do not possess'. But the context shows that here it means 'possession of obedience'. Had it meant creative possession, he would not have attributed it to

himself without making it clear that real possession belongs to God only, and whatever he owns is only that which God has given into his possession; and when he explained to his Lord his desistance and despair of their positive response to his call, he left the judgement in God's hand and said: "*therefore make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors.*"

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Jethro (Shu'ayb): Of the same style is the curse, which Shu'ayb did against his people, when he said: "*Our Lord! Decide between us and our people with truth; and Thou art the best of deciders.*" (7:89).

Thus, he asks for fulfilment of the divine promise after he lost all hope of his call being effective among them; and requests Him to decide between him and them with truth, as God has said: *And every nation had a messenger; so when their messenger came, the matter was decided* between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly (10:47).

He used the pronoun: *us*, because he joined the believers to himself; and the unbelievers had threatened him and the believers all together when they had said: "*We will most certainly turn you out, O Shu'ayb! And* (also) *those who believe with you, from our town, or you shall come back to our faith*" (7:88). So, he joined them to himself and abandoned his people in their misdeeds, and proceeded with the believers to his Lord, and said: "*Our Lord! Decide between us ...*"

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He adhered in his prayer to the noble divine name: "*the best of the deciders,*" because, as mentioned earlier adherence to the attribute, which agrees with the text of the prayer, is an intense support tantamount to adjuration. It is contrary to the talk of Moses quoted earlier: "*My Lord! Surely I have no control* (upon any) *but my own self and my brother; therefore make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors;*" because, as we had explained, his words were not really a prayer; rather they were an allusion that he would desist from his call and return all the matters to God. So there was no reason for adjuration, contrary to the talk of Shu'ayb.

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David & Solomon: Another example is what God has quoted of the praise of David and Solomon (peace be upon them). God says: *And certainly We gave knowledge to David and Solomon, and they both said: "Praise be to Allah, Who has made us to excel many of His believing servants*" (27:15).

The aspects of manner in their praise and thank, and their attribution

of their knowledge to God, are clear. They did not say like what is quoted from some others, as Qārūn said to his people when they admonished him not to show arrogance in the land because of his wealth: *He says: "I have been given this only on account of the knowledge I have"* (28:78); or as God describes about some others: *Then when their messengers came to them with clear proofs, they exulted in what they had with them of knowledge, and there beset them that which they used to mock* (40:83).

There is no harm in the two prophets' praising God for making them excel many of the believers, because it manifests a particular blessing and describes a fact; it is not something like showing arrogance against the servants of God, which would invite condemnation. God has mentioned that a group of believers had asked for excellence and has praised them for their sublime nature and high ambitions, as He says: *And they who say: "O our Lord! ... and make us leaders for those who are pious"* (25:74).

Solomon: Another example is what has been reported from Solomon in the story of the ant, as He says: *Until when they came to the valley of the ants, an ant said: "O ants! Enter your abodes,* (so that) *Solomon and his hosts may not crush you while they do not know." So he smiled, wondering at her word, and said: "My Lord! Grant me that I should be grateful for Thy favor which Thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I should do good such as Thou art pleased with, and make me enter, by Thy mercy, into Thy servants, the good ones"* (27:18–19).

The ant by its talk reminded him of his great kingdom which was strengthened by subduing the wind as it flew by his order, and the jinns made for him what he wanted, and the knowledge of the birds' speech, etc. But this kingdom did not come to his mind as the brightest wish to which man arrives, as it happens in us; it did not make him forget his servitude and his poverty. It rather came to his mind as a favor that his Lord had bestowed on him. So, he remembered his Lord and His blessings, which He had bestowed especially on him and on his parents. And this remembrance from a servant like him, and in such a condition, was the most excellent of manners *vis-à-vis* his Lord.

He remembered the favors of his Lord; although a multitude of favors and blessings were bestowed upon him, yet what he was thinking about at that time and place was the great kingdom and the over-powering authority;

and that is why he mentioned good deed and asked his Lord to grant him that he should do good deed; because good deed and good character are desirable from him who sits on the throne of kingdom.

In view of all the above factors, he first asked his Lord to grant him that he should be grateful for His favor; then that he should do good; and he was not content to ask merely for good deed, but added the proviso: "*as thou art pleased with*"; it was because he was a servant who was not concerned with other than his Lord, and he wanted to do good deed only to please his Lord; then he completed the prayer of *tawfiq* for goodness of deed by the prayer for goodness of self, so he said: "*and make me enter, by Thy mercy, into Thy servants, the good ones*."

Jonah: Another example is God's narration about Jonah (peace be upon him), who prayed with these words while in the belly of the whale that had swallowed him. God says: "*And Jonah, when he went away in wrath, so he thought that We would not straiten him, so he called out among afflictions:* "*There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee; surely I am of those who make themselves to suffer loss*" (21:87).

As the Qur'an relates, Jonah (peace be upon him) had asked his Lord to bring down punishment upon his people. God granted his request, and Jonah conveyed this to his people. However, when they were on the brink of facing this punishment, they turned in repentance to their Lord, and He lifted the punishment. Seeing this, Jonah left his people in dismay and embarked on a journey, eventually boarding a ship. A whale obstructed the ship, leading them to cast lots to determine who would be sacrificed to the whale, appeasing it and sparing the others. Jonah's name was drawn, and he was cast into the sea, where the whale swallowed him. He continued to glorify God in the whale's belly until God commanded the whale to cast him onto the shore. This was nothing but divine discipline, a means by which God educates His prophets according to their various circumstances. God Almighty states, "*But had it not been that he was of those who glorify* (*Us*)*, he would certainly have tarried in its belly to the Day when they will be raised*" (37:143–144). Jonah's departure from his people, and his subsequent journey, represented (a similitude of a servant) who disagreed with a decree of his Lord, became angry, and fled from His service, neglecting the responsibilities of his servitude. God did not approve of this

(representation), and so disciplined him. He was tested and confined in a narrow prison, unable to move even a finger, engulfed in layers of darkness. It was there that he called out, "*There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee, surely I am of those who make themselves to suffer loss*" (21:87).

All of this served a singular purpose: To enlighten him, contrary to his previous condition, that God possesses the power to capture and detain him wherever He wills, and to act upon him according to His wishes. There is no fleeing from God, except to Him. This experience in the belly of the whale led him to the realization that only God is worthy of worship, with no equal, and none can escape His servitude. Thus, he proclaimed: "*There is no god but You*." It is noteworthy that he did not address God with the attribute of Lordship; this prayer is unique among the prayers of the prophets, as it is the only one that does not begin with the name 'Lord'.

Then he recounted what transpired after he left his people following God's decision not to destroy them with the punishment He had sent upon them. He affirmed injustice for himself and glorified God from any hint of injustice or deficiency, saying: "*glory be to Thee, surely I am of those who make themselves to suffer loss.*"

However, he did not articulate his true need—the reinstatement to his former status of servitude—considering himself unworthy of even the right to ask for a favor, due to profound shame and remorse. The indication of his unexpressed request is evident in the subsequent divine statement: *So We responded to him and delivered him from the grief* (21:88).

The evidence that his request was for a return to his previous status is found in the words of God: *Then We cast him on to the vacant surface of the earth while he was sick; and We caused to grow up for him a gourd-plant; and We sent him to a hundred thou-sand, rather they exceeded; and they believed, so We gave them pro-vision till a time* (37:145–148).

Job: Another example is found in the story of Job when he said after he became chronically ill and lost all his properties and sons: *And Job, when he cried to his Lord,* (saying)*:* "*Harm has afflicted me, and Thou art the most Merciful of the merciful*" (21:83).

The aspects of good manners are evident here as explained in earlier cases. Job did not clearly mention his need as was seen in the prayers of Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jonah (peace be upon them), thinking himself

unworthy of attention and considering his affairs too trivial to be mentioned. The prophets' prayers, as described earlier and as will be seen afterwards, had never mentioned the requirements clearly, when they were related to worldly affairs, although they did not want any such thing because of any base desires.

From another angle: His mentioning the reason which led him to beseech, like affliction of harm, and describing the attribute found in Him Who is asked from, which incites the beseecher to ask, like His being *most Merciful of the merciful*, and remaining silent about the actual need, present the most eloquent allusion that it was not necessary to mention the need, because it would suggest that the above factors were not sufficient to induce the mercy of *the most Merciful of the merciful*, rather there was need to describe it in so many words!

Zachariah: Another example is of Zachariah as God says: *A mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant, Zachariah, when he called upon his Lord in a low voice. He said: "My Lord! Surely my bones are weakened and my head has flared with hoariness, and, my Lord! I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee; and surely I fear my relatives after me, and my wife is barren, therefore grant me from Thyself an heir, who should inherit me and inherit from the progeny of Jacob, and make him, my Lord! One in whom Thou art well-pleased."* (19:2–6).

What prompted him to offer this prayer and encouraged him to ask His Lord for a son was what he had observed Mary, daughter of ʿImrān, in her abstinence and worship, and how God had honored her with the manners of servitude and distinguished her with sustenance directly from Himself, as God describes in the chapter of "The House of ʿImrān": *... and gave her into the charge of Zachariah; whenever Zachariah entered the sanctuary to* (see) *her, he found with her food. He said: "O Mary! Whence comes this to you?" She said: "It is from Allah." Surely Allah gives sustenance to whom He pleases, without measure. There did Zachariah pray to his Lord; he said: "My Lord! Grant me from Thee good offspring; surely Thou art the Hearer of the prayer."* (3:37–38)

At that juncture, he was overwhelmed by intense longing for a good and pious offspring who would inherit him and worship his Lord in a way that would please Him, in the same way as Mary inherited ʿImrān and

exerted herself to the utmost in worshipping her Lord, and thus got honor from Him. At the same time, he looked at himself that old age had taken his hold and his strength had gone down, and likewise his wife was old and weak, and to top all this, she was barren even in her child-bearing age; so he was afflicted with grief of deprivation of a good and pleasing child which only God could know. Overwhelmed by divine zeal and reliance on his Lord, he found himself unable to restrain himself. He turned to his Lord, describing his condition in a manner that sought to invoke divine mercy and affection. He spoke of his unwavering commitment to servitude and supplication from his youth until now, a time when his bones had grown weak and his hair had turned hoary with age. He reflected on his history of successful prayers and his steadfast belief in the Lord as the Hearer of prayers. Therefore, he implored his Lord to hear his current prayer and grant him the blessing of a worthy heir.

The proof of what we have said that he had asked what he had done, under the influence of intense emotion and sorrow, is seen in his response when God revealed to him that his prayer was granted: *He said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son, and my wife is barren, and I myself have reached indeed the extreme degree of old age?" He said: "So shall it be; your Lord says: 'It is easy to me, and indeed I created you before, when you were nothing'"* (19:8–9). It clearly shows that when he heard about granting of his prayer, he recovered from his condition, and began wondering because of the strangeness of the prayer and its acceptance, until he asked his Lord about it in the form of a farfetched proposition and asked for a sign for himself which he was given.

In his prayer, he was guided by deep feelings and overwhelming sorrow. This is why he began his prayer by explaining the severity of his situation in his devotion to the Lord. He had devoted his life to repentance and supplication, reaching a point where anyone with compassion would feel for him deeply. Then, he prayed for a son, justifying his request with the belief that God hears all prayers.

This is the meaning of what he said as preamble of his prayer; it was not that he was trying to put his Lord under his obligation by showing his extended servitude—far be it from the status of prophethood. Therefore, the meaning of his prayer: "*My Lord! Grant me from Thee good offspring; surely Thou art the Hearer of prayer*" (3:38), is as follows: "I am asking You,

not because my long service and many prayers to You are significant, or because they obligate You to me in any way. Instead, my request comes from knowing You hear Your servants' prayers and respond to those who are in need and call out to You. I am driven to make this request by my concern about what will happen with my relatives after I'm gone, and this worry strongly urges me to ask You for a good offspring."

It has been described earlier that as part of the good manner used in his prayer, he said after this fear of the relatives: "*... and make him, my Lord! One in whom Thou art well-pleased*" (19:6). Pleasantness, although by nature it denotes being pleasing to its subject, and being unrestricted it contains pleasure of God and pleasure of Zachariah, and pleasure of John; but his words: *good offspring* (3:37), show that it denotes his being good and pleasing to Zachariah, because an offspring is good to its progenitor, not to others.

As mentioned earlier, demonstrating good manners in his prayer, he expressed his concern about his relatives by saying, "*... and make him, my Lord! One in whom Thou art well-pleased*" (19:6). While the term 'pleasantness' generally implies being pleasing to the subject, in its broadest sense it encompasses the pleasure of God, Zachariah, and John. However, his use of the term '*good offspring*' (3:37) suggests that it specifically refers to being pleasing and good in Zachariah's view, as an offspring is typically seen as good by its progenitor, rather than by others.

Jesus: Another example of the good manners is seen from the Christ when he asked for the table, as God quotes him: *Jesus the son of Mary said: 'O Allah, our Lord! Send down to us food from heaven which should be to us an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us, and a sign from Thee, and grant us sustenance, and Thou art the best of providers'* (5:114).

The story described in the Divine Book about the question of the disciples to Jesus for sending down food from heaven, shows by its context that it was one of the hardest requests for Jesus; because their quoted wordings: "*Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?*" (5:112), first, put under question the power of God, and it does not agree with the manner of servitude; even if they intended to ask about the underlying reason, not the power itself, the ugliness of the wording remains in its place.

Second, it contained suggestion of a new sign, although his signs were covering them from all sides—his noble personality was a sign in itself; his speaking in the cradle was another sign, and so were his reviving dead body, his creating a bird, his restoring the blind and lepers to health, his giving information of the unseen, as well as his knowledge of the Torah, the Injīl, the Book and the Wisdom were divine signs, which did not leave any room for any doubt and suspicion to anyone. In this background, their choosing a sign for themselves and asking for it was manifestly tantamount to playing with divine signs. That was why he admonished them by saying: "*Fear Allah if you are believers*" (5:112). But they insisted on it and explained their suggestion in these words: "*We desire that we should eat of it and that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know that you have indeed spoken the truth to us and that we may be of the witnesses to it*" (5:113). So, they compelled him to ask for it, which he finally did.

Jesus, with his divinely inspired wisdom, refined the request that had been put forth, reshaping it in a way that was fitting for the realm of divine power and majesty. Firstly, he transformed it into a concept of an *'īd*, a celebration specifically for him and his followers, as it was a unique, proposed sign not found among the other prophets' signs. The signs given to the prophets were either to complete an argument or to meet the needs of the *ummah*, and this sign did not serve either purpose. Secondly, he condensed the detailed benefits described by the disciples about the miracle's descent—reassuring their hearts, affirming his truthfulness, and making them witnesses—into a succinct phrase, 'and a sign from You.' Thirdly, he addressed their wish to eat from it, placing this request last even though they had prioritized it. He then reframed it in a manner more suitable for divine consideration, saying, 'and provide for us,' and concluded with, "*and Thou art the best of providers*." This not only reinforced the request but also served as praise for the Divine Authority.

He began his prayer by calling on God with the phrase: "O God, our Lord!" Thus, he added on what is generally found in the prophets' prayers, as they used to say: "My Lord" or "Our Lord"; he did so because the situation was very tough, as explained earlier.

Another example of this manner will be seen in his direct talk with his Lord which is quoted in the Qur'an: "*And when Allah will say: 'O Jesus son of Mary! Did you say to the people: 'Take me and my mother for two gods*

besides Allah?' He will say: 'Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say)*; if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind, surely Thou art the great Knower of unseen things. I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with: 'That worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord,' and I was a witness of them as long as I was among them, but when Thou didst had taken me away, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things. If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise'"* (5:116–8).

He observed the manner in his speech, first by beginning his speech with declaring His purity from what does not fit with the glory of His arena, following the style of His speech, as He says: *And they say: "The Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son. Glory be to Him"* (21:26).

Second, he took his own self too humble to be imagined that he would say such a thing for himself, so that it would need rebuttal. That is why he did not say in this speech from the beginning to the end, "I did not say it" or "I did not do it." He only refuted it time and again by way of allusion and under cover; and said: "*It did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to* (say)." Thus he negated it through negation of its cause; that is, 'I did not have any such right so that I could utter such an untoward word.' Then he said: "*If I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it*"; So, he refuted it through refutation of its concomitant, that is, '*if I had said it, Thou must surely hadst known it, because Thy knowledge encompasses me and all unseen things.*'

Then he will say: "*I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with: 'That worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.'"* He refuted it by bringing forth its opposite, and restricting it with "not" and "save." He says: 'I had told them something, but it was the same which Thou hadst enjoined me to say,' that is, *'worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord;'* then how was it possible that I should say to them, '*Take me and my mother for two gods besides God*.'

Then he will say: "*and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou had taken me away, Thou wert the watcher over them*." It is further refutation of the above-mentioned idea; in a way it further completes the above speech: "*I did not say to them aught save what Thou*

didst enjoin me with." Its meaning is as follows: 'I did not say to them anything that is attributed to me; what I had told them was only by your order, and it was: "*Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord*"; no other commandment was ever sent to me, and I had no relation with them except witnessing of and watching over them, so long as I was among them; and when Thou didst cause me to die, my connection with them was cut off and Thou wert the watcher over them by Thy everlasting and general witnessing, before Thou didst cause me to die and after that, over them and over every other thing.'

Now, that the talk will reach thus stage, he will decide to repudiate this idea from himself through another reason which would complement the above-mentioned cause, and which would absolutely deny the idea. So, he will say: "*If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.*" He will want to say in this context as follows: 'If they had gone astray as Thou hast said, then I am cut off from them and they are cut off from me. Now Thou art to deal with Thy servants alone; *if Thou shouldst chastise them*, *they are Thy servants*; and the Master, the Lord, has the authority to chastise his servants if they disobey him and associate others with him, and they deserve to be punished; *and if Thou shouldst forgive them,* there is no reproof against Thee, because *Thou art the Mighty,* unsubdued, *the Wise*, who does not do any unwise and vain deed, and who always does what is more suitable.'

What we have explained, shows fine aspects of the manners of servitude in his speech. Also, ponder on the fact that whenever he uttered a sentence, he mixed it with the finest praise, in the most eloquent description and in the truest tongue.

Muḥammad: Another example of the divine manner is seen in the words of His Prophet which has been quoted by God, and He has joined the believers of his *ummah* in it: *The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and* (so do) *the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers: "We make no difference between any of His messengers*"; *and they say: "We hear and obey; our Lord! Thy forgiveness* (do we crave)*, and to Thee is the eventual course.*" *Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for*

it is (the benefit of) *what it has earned, and upon it is* (the evil of) *what it has wrought:* "*Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake; Our Lord! Do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord! Do not impose upon us that which we have no strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us; Thou art our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people*" (2:285–286).

As you see, the divine words describe the Prophet's belief in the noble Qur'an in all that it contains of fundamental beliefs and divine commandments; then it joins with him the believers among his *ummah*, not only those who were present near him, but also those were to come later, as is manifest from the context.

It then follows that what the verses contain of acknowledgement, praise of prayer, related to some of them would be the narration of the tongue of their condition although possibly their tongues; or the Prophet himself could have said it directly talking with his Lord on his own behalf and on behalf of the believers, because they by their faith were the branches of the tree of his blessed soul.

The two verses contain a sort of comparison and equilibrium between the People of the Book and the believers of this *ummah* in the manner of their acceptance of what was revealed to them in the Book of God; or, in other words, with respect to their courteousness of servitude *vis-à-vis* the Book sent to them. Apparently, God has praised these believers in these two verses and has eased their burden exactly in those aspects in which He has admonished the People of the Book and put them to shame in the verses of the chapter "The Cow." He has indeed criticizer them because they differentiated between the angels of God, as they hated Gabriel and loved the others; and between the revealed Divine Books, as they disbelieved in the Qur'an and believed in previous ones; and between the messengers of God, as they believed in Moses (or in Moses and Jesus) and disbelieved in Muḥammad (may God's blessings and peace be on him and them), and between His commands, as they believed in some commands of the Book of God and disbelieved in some others; but the believers of this *ummah*: *believe in Allah, and His angels, and His Books, and His messengers:* "*We make no difference between any of His messengers*."

They indeed observed proper manners *vis-à-vis* their Lord by submitting to the cognizance sent to them by God. Then they showed the manners

by positively responding to the divine commandments, when they said: "*We hear and obey*"; unlike the Jews who had said: "*We hear and we disobey.*" After that they showed proper manner when they counted their own selves, the slaves possessed by their Lord, who do not own anything, and they do not try to put God under their obligation because of their faith and obedience; so they said: "*Thy forgiveness* (do we crave)"; they were not like the Jews who had said: "*He soon will forgive us*"; and said: "*Surely Allah is needy and we are self sufficient*"; and said: "*The Fire will not touch us except for counted days*," and other similar erroneous utterances.

Then God said: *Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability, for it is* (the benefit of) *what it has earned, and upon it is* (the evil of) *what it has wrought*. It is because the divinely laid responsibility, by its disposition, follows the nature on which He has created the people; and it is known that the nature, being a sort of creation, does not invite except to what it has been equipped with; and certainly in it is found the felicity of life.

However, if the topic would be of importance which would demand more attention to itself, or if the servant who was ordered went out of the fold of nature, beyond the appearance of servitude, then it would be Ok as a secondary natural command for the master of the one having authority in his hand to give him an order beyond the usual extent of its ability; for example, he may tell him to observe precaution on mere doubt, or to avoid forgetfulness and mistake when utmost attention is given to the topic, example, indispensability of precaution in connection with blood, genital and property in Islamic; or to increase the inconvenience and tighten the screw the more one increases in disputation and insists in questioning, as God has given us many such an information concerning the Children of Israel.

In any case, His statement, '*Allah does not impose upon any soul*,' either follows the speech of the Prophet and the believers, and they said it as a prelude to their statement: "*Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake.*" This serves as praise for Him, the Exalted, and to dispel any assumption that God would hold accountable beyond capacity or impose overly burdensome rules. This is refuted by the fact that Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity, and what they asked in their statement, "*Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake*"

refers to secondary types of rulings arising from the ruling itself or from the obstinacy of the obliged, not from Him, the Exalted.

Or, it is the divine speech, inserted between two phrases of their prayer, which are reported here, that is, "*Thy forgiveness* (do we crave)," and: "*Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget,*" in order to give the above-mentioned connotation, in addition to teaching and training them under divine guidance; this too will be a sort of their speech, because they are the believers in what God has sent down, and this too is from Him. In any case, this is what their speech relies on and their prayer depends upon.

Then God mentions the remainder of their prayer; or you may say, the other group of their problems: "*Our Lord! Do not punish us ...*," "*Our Lord! Do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us*"; "*Our Lord! Do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us*," it is as though they want pardon for what they might have committed in forgetfulness or by mistake and all such reasons; "*and grant us protection and have mercy on us*" for all our sins and mistakes. Forgiveness here does not entail repetition although they had earlier said: "*Thy forgiveness* (do we crave)," because it quotes their speech in order to compare their condition and their manner with their Lord with the People of the Book in their dealing with their Lord and regarding their Book that was sent to them; moreover, the context of prayer does not reject repetition unlike other situations.

It is not necessary to explain how this prayer contains the manner of servitude, by adhering to the attribute of Lordship time and again, and confessing to one's being possessed and under guardianship of the owner, standing at the station of humbleness and wretchedness of servitude *vis-à-vis* the Mighty Lord.

The noble Qur'an contains divine trainings and sublime teachings to the Prophet by various types of praise he uses for his Lord, or the prayers he offers before Him. For example: *Say:* "*O Allah, Master of the kingdom! Thou givest the kingdom to whomsoever Thou pleasest, ...*" (3:26); *Say:* "*O Allah! Originator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen! Thou judgest between Thy servants ...*" (39:46); *Say:* "*Praise be to Allah and peace on His servants whom He has chosen: ...*" (27:59); *Say:* "*Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are* (*all*) *for Allah, ...*" (6:162); *... and say:* "*O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge*" (20:114); *And*

say: "O my Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from the evil suggestions of the Satans, and I seek refuge in Thee! O my Lord! From their presence" (23:97–98), in addition to numerous such verses.

All these collectively contain the fine manners, which God trained His messenger with, and he in his turn exhorted his *ummah* to observe it.

Now, we should see how they preserved the manners towards their Lord while they talked with their people: This too is a vast chapter and it is attached to the manners of praising God, the glorified. From another angle, it is a sort of practical *tablīgh*, which is not less, or rather is more, effective than the verbal *tablīgh*.

There are many such examples in the Qur'an. God quotes a talk between Noah and his *ummah*: They said: "*O Noah! Indeed you have disputed with us and lengthened dispute with us, therefore bring to us what you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful ones.*" *He said: "Allah only will bring it to you if He please, and you will not make* (*Him*) *incapable. And if I intend to give you good advice, my advice will not profit you if Allah intended that He should leave you to go astray; He is your Lord, and to Him shall you be returned*" (11:32–34). He refuted from himself what they were attributing to him, in order to show his inability in this way; he attributes it to his Lord, and shows finest manner by adding the phrase: "if He please," and then saying: "and you will not make (Him) incapable," that is, will not make God incapable. That is why he had used the word: God, instead of saying, 'My Lord', because God is He to Whom is the end goal of every beauty and grandeur. Also, he did not consider this much refutation and affirmation enough until he supported it by saying that his advice would not profit them if God did not intend them to get its benefit. Thus he completed the refutation of power from himself and its affirmation for his Lord, and showed its reason by saying: "He is your Lord, and to Him you will be returned."

This is a dialogue steeped in beautiful manners vis-à-vis God; Noah used this speech to address the transgressors of his *ummah*, disputing with them. And he was the first prophet who opened the door of argumentation in calling to the monotheism, and stood up against the idol worship, as the noble Qur'an describes.

This is the greatest of the doors which lets the researcher's eyes free to look at the prophets' manners; one sees in them the finest of their

characteristics which are steeped in good manner and perfection. It is because all their talks and deeds, movements and stillness, are based on contemplation and presence of servitude, although, in form, it looks like the deed of him who is absent from his Lord, and his Lord is absent from him. God says: ... *and those who are with Him are not proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary. They glorify* (Him) *by night and day; they are never languid* (21:19–20).

God has quoted in His Book many dialogues of Hūd, Ṣāliḥ,Abraham, Moses, Shuʿayb, Joseph, Solomon, Jesus and Muḥammad, etc. (peace be upon them), in different conditions of theirs, like hardship and ease, war and peace, disclosure and secrecy, good omens and warning and so on.

Contemplate on the divine speech: *So Moses returned to his people wrathful, sorrowing. Said he: "O my people! Did not your Lord promise you a goodly promise: did then the time seem long to you, or did you wish that displeasure from your Lord should be due to you, so that you broke* (your) *promise to me?*" (20:86). He mentions Moses when he returned to his people while he was filled with wrath and rage, but it did not turn him away from observation of manner while mentioning his Lord.

Also, look at the divine words: *And she in whose house he was sought to make himself yield* (to her)*, and she made fast the doors and said: "Come forward." He said: "I seek Allah's refuge, surely my Lord made good my abode: Surely the unjust do not prosper*" (12:23).

And the divine words: *They said: "By Allah! Now has Allah certainly chosen you over us, and we were certainly sinners." He said:* "(There shall be) *no reproof against you this day; Allah may forgive you, and He is the most Merciful of the merciful*" (12:91–92). He mentions Joseph in privacy wherein the woman of ʿAzīz tried to make Joseph yield to her; it was a situation where man forgets all understanding; yet it did not turn him away from piety, and did not distract him from observation of manners when mentioning his Lord and with others.

Also, the divine words: ... *Then when he saw it settled beside him, he said: This is of the grace of my Lord that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful; and whoever is grateful, he is grateful only for his own soul, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely my Lord is Self-sufficient, Honoured* (27:40). So, this is Solomon, and he was given of the great kingdom, effective order and amazing power, that he ordered to bring the throne of the queen

of Sheba from Sheba to Palestine, and it was brought down in less than a twinkling of an eye, yet he was not taken over by pride and pompousness and did not forget his Lord, and at once offered praise to his Lord in the presence of his courtiers with best praise.

Compare it with the story of Nimrod with Abraham, as God says: *Have you not considered him who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because Allah had given him the kingdom? When Abraham said: "My Lord is He Who gives life and causes to die," he said: "I give life and cause death"* (2:258). He said it when he ordered two prisoners to be brought before and ordered one of them to be killed and the other to be freed.

Or, it may be compared with what Pharaoh said, as God has quoted him: "*O my people! Is not the kingdom of Egypt mine? And these rivers flow beneath me; do you not then see? Nay! I am better than this fellow who is contemptible, and who can hardly speak distinctly: But why have not bracelets of gold been put upon him, or why have there not come with him angels as companions?*" (43:51–53).

He shows his pride in the kingdom of Egypt and its rivers and a quantity of gold which was in his possession and that of his nobles; and it did not take him long to announce: 'I am your sublime lord,' and this was the same fellow who was being humiliated by Moses's signs day after day, like flood, locust, lice and frogs, etc.

Other examples of manner: God says: *... when they were both in the cave, when he was saying to his companion: "Grieve not, surely Allah is with us"* (9:40); *And when the Prophet secretly communicated a piece of information to one of his wives ... so when he informed her of it, she said: "Who informed you this?" He said: "The Knowing, the One Aware, informed me"* (66:3). So, the hard situation, terror and anxiety on the day of fear did not upset him to forget his Lord who was with him, and his noble self was not affected by the threatening situation; and likewise the information which he secretly communicated to one of his wives, all this contains the good manners in referring to his Lord.

These are a few examples, and in the same style we find the finest manner and noble characteristics, which appear in their stories in the noble Qur'an. We have already gone beyond our self-imposed limit in this topic, otherwise we would have narrated their stories at length and described them fully.

Prophets' manners with the people in their dealings and talks: Samples of this manner are found in their arguments with the unbelievers which are quoted in the Qur'an, and in their talks with the believers; also some aspects of their life histories which are narrated.

As for the manners in talk, you will not find them in their talks with those arrogant and ignorant people ever using any word that would annoy them or any abusing, insulting or debasing remark; while their adversaries went to the extreme in abusing and taunting them and in attacking and mocking them, but they never replied to them except with best of the words and most sincere admonition; they turned away from them in peace, and when the ignorant ones talked to them they said: "Peace!"

God says: *But the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his* (Noah's) *people said: "We do not consider you but a human being like ourselves, and we do not see any have followed you but those who are meanest of us at first thought and we do not see in you any excellence over us; nay, we deem you liars." He said: "O my people! Tell me if I have with me clear proof from my Lord, and He has granted me mercy from Himself and it has been made obscure to you; shall we constrain you to* (accept) *it while you are averse from it?*" (11:27–28).

Also, He quotes the tribe of ʿĀd, the people of Hūd, as saying: "*We do not say aught but that some of our gods have smitten you with evil." He said: "Surely I call Allah to witness, and do you bear witness too, that I am clear of what you associate* (with God)*, besides Him, ...*" (11:54–55).

They meant that some of their gods had smitten Hūd with evil, that is, madness or idiocy, etc.

Also, God quotes Āzar as saying: "*Do you dislike my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist I will certainly revile you* (or, stone you to death) *and leave me for a time." He said: "Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; surely He is ever Affectionate to me*" (19:46–47).

Also, He quotes the people of Shuʿayb as saying: *The chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: "Most surely we see you in folly, and most surely we think you to be of the liars." He said: "O my people! There is no folly in me, but I am a messenger of the Lord of the worlds; I deliver to you the message of my Lord and I am a faithful adviser to you*" (7:66–68).

Also, God says: *Pharaoh said: "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" He said: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, if*

you understand." ... Said he: "Most surely your Messenger who is sent to you is mad." He said: "The Lord of the east and the west and what is between them, if you understand" (26:23–28).

Also, He says quoting the people of Mary: *They said: "O Mary! Surely you have done a strange thing. O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman." But she pointed to him. They said: "How should we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?" He said: "Surely I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet. "* (19:27–30)

And God has said consoling His Prophet when they accused him of soothsaying, madness and of being a poet: *Therefore, continue to remind, for by the grace of your Lord, you are not a sooth-sayer, or a madman. Or do they say: "A poet, we wait for him the evil accidents of time." Say: "Wait, for surely I too with you am of those who wait"* (52:29–31).

Also, He says: *And the unjust say: "You do not follow any but a man bewitched." See what likeness do they apply to you, so they have gone astray; therefore they shall not be able to find a way* (25:8–9).

Add to it many other types of abuse, accusation and insult which have been quoted in the Qur'an; yet it has not been narrated from the prophets that they ever faced them with rudeness or obscenity; they rather replied to them with correct speech and good and gentle logic, in obedience to the divine instruction which had taught them good speech and beautiful manners. God says addressing Moses and Aaron: *Go both of you to Pharaoh; surely he has become inordinate. Then speak to him a gentle word, haply he may mind or fear* (20:43–44). And He said addressing His Prophet: *And if you turn away from them to seek mercy from your Lord, which you hope for, speak to them a gentle word* (17:28).

It was an aspect of their manner in talks and discussions that they took themselves to be equal in position to general people; thus they talked with every stratum of society according to the level of its understanding. It becomes manifest if you ponder on their talks with the people with all their differences beginning from Noah onwards. Both sects have narrated from the Prophet that he said: "Surely, we the group of the prophets have been ordered to talk with the people to the degree of their understanding."

It must be known that the sending of prophets was only based on the foundation of guidance and its explanation and support. So, it was

incumbent on them to equip themselves with truth in their mission, be devoid of falsity, and remain on guard against traps of error whatever they might be, whether it agreed with the people's pleasure or went against their liking, whether it resulted in their willingness or unwillingness. God has ordained very strict prohibition and extreme caution in this matter for His prophets, the falsity cannot be followed in words or deeds even for helping the truth, for the falsity is falsity no matter it falls in the path of truth or not; and the call to truth does not combine with sanction of falsity even in the path of truth; a truth which is led to by falsehood and which results from untruth is not a total truth.

That is why God has said: ... *nor could I take those who lead* (others) *astray for aiders.* (18:51); *And had it not been that We had already made you firm, you would certainly have been near to incline to them a little; in that case We would certainly have made you to taste a double* (punishment) *in this life and a double* (punishment) *after death, then you would not have found any helper against Us* (17:74–75). For there is no indulgence, no close association, and no adulation in truth, and no respect for falsity.

And that is why God equipped the people of His mission and guardians of His religion, that is, the prophets (peace be upon them), with what would pave for them the path for following and helping the truth. God says: *There is no harm in the Prophet doing that which Allah has ordained for him: such has been the course of Allah with respect to those who have gone before; and the command of Allah is a decree that is made absolute: Those who deliver the messages of Allah and fear Him, and do not fear any one but Allah; and Allah is sufficient to take account* (33:38–39). God says that the prophets do not feel any difficulty in doing what God has ordained for them; they fear only Him, and do not fear any one other than Him; there is no snag in their declaring the truth, come what may.

Then He promised them help in what they stood up to do for Him. He says: *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the messengers: Most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones.* (38:171–3). *Most surely We help Our messengers,* (40:51).

That is why we find in their narrated stories that they do not care for anything in declaration of truth and the word of veracity, even if the people did not like it and found its taste bitter. God quotes Noah addressing his

people: ... *but I consider you a people who are ignorant* (11:29). And Hūd said: ... *you are nothing but forgers* (of lies), (11:50). Also, he told them: *Indeed uncleanness and wrath from your Lord have lighted upon you; what! Do you dispute with me about names, which you and your fathers have given? Allah has not sent any authority for them;* ... (7:71). And He quotes Lot as saying: ... *nay, you are an extravagant people* (7:81). Also, He quotes word of Abraham addressed to his people: "*Fie on you and on what you worship besides Allah; what! Do you not then understand?*" (21:67); again He quotes Moses as he replied to Pharaoh's claim: "*Most surely I deem you, O Moses! To be a man bewitched.*" *He said:* "*Truly you know that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these as clear proofs, and most surely I believe you, O Pharaoh! To be given over to perdition*" (17:101–102), that is, prevented from believing in truth, turned out, steeped in perdition. There are many other such examples.

All of this shows observation of manners about truth and its following; and there is no desired thing more honorable than this, nor is there any sought after item more noble and more valuable. Yet sometimes it contains what goes against the prevalent manners among the people because their lives are based on following the side of desires and proceeding to the life's pleasure, by indulging the people of falsehood, and submitting to those who create disturbance in society and exceed the limit in practical policy.

In short, manner, as earlier explained, appears in palatable words and good deeds. Thus it differs with changed ways of life in societies, and the opinions and beliefs, which are settled in it and shape it. As for the divine mission, upon which the religious society depends, it only follows the truth in belief and action. The truth does not mix with falsity or depend on or get supported by it. So, there is no escape from declaring and following it. The manner that springs from it is that one should proceed on the best path of truth and dress in it with the finest robe, like opting for soft words when one has the option of speaking softly or harshly, and to choose hastening in doing good when both hastening and delaying are permissible.

It is this aspect which God has ordered in His Book: *And We ordained for him* (Moses) *in the tablets admonition of every kind and clear explanation of all things: so take hold of them with firmness and enjoin your people to take hold of what is best thereof;* ... (7:145). Then He gave good news to His servants who adhered to it: ... *there-fore give good news to My servants, those*

who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are they whom Allah has guided, and those it is who are the men of understanding (39:17–18). So there is no manner found in falsity, nor any manner in a mixture of truth and falsehood; whatever is out of the fold of pure truth is error which the Guardian of truth is not pleased with, and He has said: ... *and what is there after the truth but error;* (10:32)

It is this factor that led the prophets of truth to clear declaration and true language, even if on occasions it was against the demands of sycophancy and false manners that are prevalent in non-religious societies.

It was a part of their manners in their dealings and characteristics with the people that they accorded respect to the weak and to the powerful in equal degree; if there was increase and augmentation, it was for the people of knowledge and piety. For, when they built on the foundation of servitude and upbringing of human soul, it resulted in equality of judgement between rich and poor, big and small, man and woman, master and slave, ruler and ruled, leader and follower, king and subject. At this juncture, the distinction of attributes becomes ineffectual, exclusive possession of social distinctions by powerful people is negated; and division of gain and loss, deprivation and enjoyment, felicity and infelicity between the attributes of wealth and poverty, and power and weakness, becomes inoperative; the system is nullified in which the powerful and wealthy are placed at the topmost stratum, enjoy the most tender life, are given in every endeavour the easiest and most comfortable and in every responsibility the lightest; rather all people are treated equally. God says: *O you men! Surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most pious;* ... (49:13). In this way, the arrogance of the powerful because of their power, and pride of the rich because of their wealth, turns into humility for the truth, and hastening to forgiveness and mercy, racing to the good deeds, endeavouring in the way of God for the purpose of God's pleasure.

Thus, they accorded respect to the poor just as they did to the wealthy, and observed good manners with the weak as they did with the rich. Rather the weaker section was reserved for more magnanimity, mercy and graciousness. God says teaching His Prophet: *And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His good will, and let not*

your eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world's life; and do not follow him whose heart We have made unmindful to Our remembrance, and he follows his low desires and his case is one in which due bounds are exceeded. (18:28); *And do not drive away those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, they desire only His favor; neither are you answerable for any reckoning of theirs, nor are they answerable for any reckoning of yours, so that you should drive them away and thus be of the unjust.* (6:52); *Do not strain your eyes after what We have given certain classes of them to enjoy, and do not grieve for them, and make yourself gentle to the believers; and say: "Surely I am the plain warner"* (15:88–89).

This fine manner is seen in the dialogue between Noah and his people as God narrates: *But the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: "We do not consider you but a man like our-selves, and we do not see any have followed you but those who are the meanest of us at first thought, and we do not see in you any excellence over us; nay, we deem you liars." He said: "O my people! Tell me if I have with me clear proof from my Lord, and He has granted me mercy from Himself and it has been made obscure to you; shall we constrain you to* (accept) *it while you are averse from it? And O my people! I ask you not for wealth in return for it; my reward is only with Allah and I am not going to drive away those who believe; surely they shall meet their Lord, but I consider you a people who are ignorant* (because of your disdaining the poor and weak servants of God)*: And O my people! Who will help me against Allah if I drive them away? Will you not then mind? And I do not say to you that I have the treasures of Allah; and I do not know the unseen, nor do I say that I am an angel* (that is, I do not claim for myself any distinction against you except that I have been sent as a messenger to you)*: nor do I say about those whom your eyes hold in mean estimation* (that) *Allah will never grant them* (any) *good—Allah knows best what is in their souls* (of the good and felicity expected from them)*:—for then most surely I should be of the unjust"* (11:27–31).

A similar negation of distinction is seen in the words Shu'ayb addressed to his people, as God narrates: "*... and I do not desire that in opposition to you I should betake myself to that which I forbid you: I desire nothing but reform so far as I am able to, and with none but Allah is the direction of my affair to a right course; on Him do I rely and to Him do I turn*" (11:88). And God says introducing His Messenger to the people: *Certainly a Messenger*

has come to you from among yourselves, grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you, to the believers (he is) *compassionate, merciful.* (9:128); And there are some of them who hurt the Prophet and say: "*He is an ear;*" *say:* "*A hearer of good for you* (who) *believes in Allah and believes in the faithful and a mercy for those of you who believe;*" (9:61); *And most surely you conform* (yourself) *to sublime morality* (68:4). Also, He says and it gathers all preceding attributes: *And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds* (21:107).

Although apparently these verses describe his good characteristics, and not his manners which are something beyond that; yet a sort of manners, as described earlier, is inferred from a sort of characteristics; moreover, manner itself is a branch of characteristics.

Other Traditions

Most of the Qur'anic verses, from which the Prophet's noble characteristics and beautiful manners inferred are revealed in the forms of imperative and prohibitive orders. Therefore, we thought it advisable to write here some traditions about his customary usage, which contain collections of his characteristics which point to his beautiful divine manners; and they are also supported by the noble Qur'anic verses.

(1) Ma'āni al-Akhbār: (al-Ṣadūq) narrates through his chain, from Abū Hālā al-Tamīmī, from al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī (peace be upon both); and through another chain from al-Riḍā, through his forefathers, from ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn from al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī (peace be upon all of them); also through a third chain, from a man from the progeny of Abū Hālā, from al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī (peace be upon both), that he said:

"I asked my maternal uncle Hind b. Abī Hālā, who was a describer of (the attributes of) the Prophet; and I was desirous that he should describe to me something of it in order that I should hold fast to it. So he said:

"'The Messenger of God was magnificent and honored, his face radiated like the full moon on moonlit night; taller than *al-marbūʿ* (of medium height), and shorter than *al-mushadhdhab* (tall and excellent); (he had) big skull and long, straight hair; if his hair was parted it separated in the middle, otherwise his hair did not reach beyond his earlobes; of bright color, wide forehead; his eyebrows

were thin and long, lengthy from one end to the other without joining in the middle; between them was a vein; he had a light overwhelming him, if one did not ponder over him, would deem him having high nasal wind pipe, of thick beard, soft checks and wide mouth; had white teeth not tightly joined; had a thin line of hair from middle of the chest to the stomach; it seemed as his neck was like that of a deer in clarity of silver; of medium stature, plump and holding himself properly; his stomach and chest were in one level; his shoulders were wide; his bone-joints were thick; his chest was broad; when he disrobed, his body was brilliant; a thin line of hair joined his neck to the navel-pit; apart from that, his breasts and belly were without hair; there was hair on his arms, shoulders and upper chest; his wrists were long, his palms wide; his palms and soles were thick; his sides flowed, his joints were soft; hollows of his soles were deep, the feet were wide, water did not adhere to them; he proceeded ahead well-balanced, and walked in humbleness, fast-paced, when he walked it seemed as if he was going down a slope; when he turned (towards someone), turned with his whole body; kept his eyes down, he looked to the earth much longer than he looked at the heaven; most of his look was observation; he hastened to say *salām* to whomever he met.'"

He said: "Then I said to him, 'Describe to me (the way of) his speaking.' He said, 'He, was constantly in grief, always contemplating, he never spoke unnecessarily; he began his talk and ended it very eloquently; he spoke short sentences, pithy and expressive, in which there was neither any superfluous word nor any shortcoming; mild-tempered, neither vain nor insulting; exalted a bounty (gifted to him) however small it might be; he never criticized any of it; however, he never derogated nor praised any taste. When he stood for the truth nobody recognized him; nothing could stand against his anger until he obtained its right for it. When he pointed, he did so with his whole palm, and when he was astonished he turned (the palm); when he talked he joined it and touched his right palm with inside of his left thumb. When he was angry he turned away and cast down his eyes; mostly his laugh was a smile; when he laughed his teeth appeared like hail-stone.'"

al-Ṣadūq says: Up to here was the narration of al-Qāsim b. al-Manī' from Ishmael b. Muḥammad b. Isḥaq b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad; and

the rest is the narrative of ʿAbdu al-Raḥmān up to the end.
"al-Ḥasan, said, 'I did not mention the (above tradition) for a while to al-Ḥusayn, then I narrated it to him, but I found that he already knew it. So, I asked him about it and found that he had asked his father about the Prophet—his entry and exit, his sitting and his features—not leaving anything out.'
"al-Ḥusayn, said, 'I did ask my father, about the entrance of the Messenger of God. He said, "His entrance in itself was allowed to him; so when he went to his house, he divided his entry in three parts: one part for God, one for his family and one for himself; then he divided his own part between himself and the people and dealt with general public through his especial people and did not keep away anything from them.
"""And it was part of his characteristics in the part of the *ummah* to give preference to the people of excellence in his manners, and apportion it on them according to their superiority in religion; so among them was one with one need, another with two needs, and a third with many needs; so he remained engaged with them and kept them busy in that which was good for them, and constantly asked about the *ummah* and informed them of that which should be done; and he used to say: 'The one who is present must convey (the message) to him who is absent;' (and he admonished): 'Convey to me the need of him who is unable to convey it (to me); because anyone who conveys to an authority the need of him who is unable to convey it himself, God will make his feet firm on the Day of Resurrection.' Nothing else was mentioned in his presence, and he did not accept from anyone any other thing; people came to him in groups and did not go out except after tasting (food), and went away as guides (to the other)."
"'And I asked him about the going out of the Messenger of God how did he do it? He said, "The Messenger of God used to preserve his tongue except from that which concerned him; he kept them united, and not to alienate them; he honored the noble man of every community and made him their governor; he remained on watch about the people and kept guards against them, without turning his face away from anyone or showing any change in his manners; he checked conditions of his companions, and asked the people about the people. He praised the good, strengthened it, showed the

ugliness of the evil, and weakened it; he was moderate in his affairs, not contradictory. He was never oblivious lest they become oblivious and incline (to one side); was never short from truth and never allowed it; those who were close to him were best of the people; the one having excellence near him was the one who was most sincere to the Muslims, and the one having greatest rank near him was the one who was best of all in beneficence and assistance."'" He, said, 'Then I asked him about his sitting. He said, "He never sat down or stood up except with remembrance (of God); he did not reserve any seat for himself; when he reached a group, he sat down where he had arrived, and he ordered (others) to do the same. He gave each of the group his due share (of attention); and no attendee in the gathering thought that any other person was more honored than him (in the Prophet's eyes). Whoever sat with him, (the Prophet), patiently remained with him until he took his leave. Whoever asked him for a need, did not return except either with that thing or with sweet words. His good manners overwhelmed the people until he was (like) a father to them; and all of them were equal in his eyes in their rights. His gathering was one of forbearance, modesty, truth and trust, voices were not raised therein, nor were people's honors disgraced there. If one of them committed a mistake, it was (gracefully) amended so that no one repeated it; they dealt with each other with justice, joining together with piety, humble with each other; they respected the elder and had mercy on the younger; they gave preference to a needy person over themselves and provided safety to a stranger."'

"Then I said, 'How was his dealing with those who sat with him?' He said, 'He had always a smiling face; he was of agreeable manner and gentle hearted; he was neither rude nor rash, neither loud voiced nor obscene; neither exposer of defects nor eulogist, he ignored what he did not desire, so neither they despaired of him nor those who had hoped of him were disappointed. He freed himself from three (things): dispute, increase and what did not concern him; and freed the people from three (things): He never condemned anyone or put him to shame; never did he look for any one's slips or defects; he did not speak except about what he hoped (divine) reward; when he talked his companions bowed their heads in silence, as though there were birds on their heads; so when he became silent, they

spoke; they did not dispute near him in a talk, whoever spoke they listened to him until he finished; their talk near him was one after another; he laughed at what they laughed at, and wondered at what they wondered at. He remained patient when a stranger was rude in his talk and demands until his companions fulfilled his requirements, and used to say: "When you see a needy person seeking his needs, fulfil it." He did not accept praise except for a favor he had done to him. He did not interrupt anyone's talk until he exceeded the limit, then he stopped it by forbidding it or standing up.

He said: "Then I asked him about the silence of the Messenger of God so he said, 'His silence was based on four (factors): forbearance, caution, estimation and meditation; as for the estimation, it was in equally looking at the people and listening to them; and as for his meditation, it was on what would abide and what would perish. Forbearance and patience were united in him; therefore nothing would enrage or agitate him. His caution had gathered in four things: his holding fast to good in order to follow it, his abstaining from evil in order to desist from it, his deep thinking regarding the welfare of his *ummah*, and standing up for what is gathered for him of the good of this world and the next.'"

Author's comment: al-Ṣadūq has also narrated it in *Makārim al-akhlāq*, copying it from the book of Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Ibraḥīm al-Ṭāliqānī who has narrated it through his trusted narrators from al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon both). al-Majlisī has said in *Biḥāru al-anwār*: "This is a famous tradition and the Sunnīs have narrated it in most of their books."

And numerous traditions on this theme or on some of its parts have been narrated from the Companions.[1]

(2) *Iḥyāu al-'Ulūm* writes: He was the most eloquent in speech and the sweetest ... He spoke comprehensive sentences, there was neither any superfluous word in them nor any shortcoming; it was as though his words followed one another; he paused between his speech in order that the hearer could memorize and preserve

1 From here about two pages of Arabic book contain meanings and explanations of the difficult words and phrases of this tradition. We are omitting it here, because our English version has incorporated them fully. (Trans.)

it; he was loud-voiced with most beautiful melody. (al-Ghazālī)

(3) *al-Tahdhīb*: (al-Ṣadūq) narrates through his chain from Isḥāq b. Jaʿfar, from his brother Moses, through his forefathers from ʿAlī that he said: "I heard the Prophet, saying, 'I have been sent with noble ethics and the best manners.'"

(4) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī said: "The Messenger of God, was more modest than a virgin girl in her private room; and when he disliked a thing, we knew it from his face." (al-Ṭabrisī)

(5) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chains, from Muḥammad b. Muslim that he said: "I heard Abū Jaʿfar saying that an angel came to the Messenger of God and said, 'Surely God has given you option to choose that you become a servant, Messenger (and) humble or a messenger angel.' (Abū Jaʿfar) said, 'So the Prophet looked at Gabriel (who) pointed with his hand that be a humble (Messenger); so he said, "(I shall be) a servant, Messenger (and) humble." The messenger (angel) said, "With (condition that) it would not decrease anything that you have got with your Lord." (He said), "And with it are the keys of the treasures of the earth."'"

(6) *Nahju al-Balāghah*: ʿAlī said: "So you follow your pure cheerful Prophet ... He gnawed at the world and did not lend any glance at it. He was most suffering of all in side and most empty of stomach. The world was offered to him but he refused to accept it. He knew that God disliked a thing, so he disliked it, and He degraded a thing, so he degraded it. If we did not have except our love to what God disliked, and our honoring what God degraded, it was enough for discord with God and deviation from God's command.

"And the Messenger of God used to eat sitting on the earth, and sat like a slave; he mended his shoes by his hand, rode an unsaddled donkey, and allowed someone to ride behind him. (Sometimes) there would be a curtain on his door with pictures on it, so he would say, 'O so-and-so! (Addressing a wife of his): Remove it from me, because whenever I look at it, I am reminded of this world and its adornments.' Thus he turned away from the world by his heart, and let its remembrance die from his soul; he liked that its adornment be wiped away from his eyes, lest he takes some equipment

from it. He did not believe that it was something to abide, and did not expect to remain therein; so he turned it out of his soul, and dispatched it from his heart and removed it from his sight. In this way, whoever hates a thing, he hates to look at it and does not like it to be mentioned before him."

(7) *al-Iḥtijāj*: Mūsā b. Jaʿfar has narrated from his father, from his forefathers, from al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī, from his father, ʿAlī (peace be upon them), inter alia, in a lengthy *ḥadīth*: "He used to weep for fear of God, the Mighty, the Great, until his place of prayer became wet—without any sin ..." (al-Ṭabrisī)

(8) *al-Manāqib*: "He used to weep until he fainted. Somebody told him, 'Has not God forgiven you your past faults and those to follow?' He said, 'Well, should I not be a grateful servant?' And exactly like that were the faintings of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, his successor in his positions." (Ibn Shahrāshūb)

Author's comment: That question was based on the idea that the purpose of divine worship is safety from chastisement; and it has been said in traditions that it is the worship of slaves; and his reply is based on the idea that the reason is to show one's gratitude to God, it is the worship of noble people, and it is another of the types of worship. It has been narrated from the Imāms of Ahl al-Bayt: "Surely among the worship is the one that is done for fear of punishment, and it is the worship of slaves; and there is the one that is done for desire of reward, and it is the worship of traders; and among them is the one that is done to show one's gratitude to God." (Some traditions say: 'for love of God'; some others say: 'because He deserves it'.)

We have discussed the meaning of these traditions in detail in vol.4 of the book under the "Commentary" of the verse: ... *and Allah will reward the grateful.*[1] (3:144). We have explained there that gratefulness to God in His worship means being sincere to Him, and that the grateful are the purified ones who are described in such wordings of God as: *Glory be to Allah* (for freedom) *from what they describe, but not so the servants of Allah, the purified ones* (37:159–60).

(9) *al-Irshād*, al-Daylamī: "Surely during the prayer of Abraham the wheezing sound of fear was heard from him because of fear of

1 *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.7, (Trans.)

God; and the Messenger of God too was like that."

(10) *Tafsīr* of Abu al-Futūḥ: It is narrated from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī that he said, "When the verse: *remember Allah, remembering frequently* (33:41) was revealed, the Messenger of God became engaged in the remembrance of God until the unbelievers said that he had become insane."

(11) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Zayd al-Shaḥḥām from Abū 'Abdillāh that he said: "The Messenger of God used to repent to God every day seventy times." "I (Zayd) said, 'Was he saying: "I seek pardon of God and return (repent) to Him?" 'He said, 'No; but he used to say, "I return to God."' I said, '(How is it that) the Messenger of God used to repent and did not return (to that fault) and we repent and then return?' He said, 'God's help is sought.'"

(12) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: (al-Ṭabrisī) narrates from 'Alī copying from *Kitābu al-Nubuwwah* that he used to say when he described the attributes of the Messenger of God: "He was the most generous of hand, the bravest of the chest, the most truthful in speech, the most fulfilling of obligations, of the mildest nature, from the noblest family; whoever saw him all of a sudden, was afraid of him, and whoever mingled with him knowing him, loved him; I did not see like him neither before him nor after him."

(13) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from 'Umar b. 'Alī from his father that he said: "It was (the style) of the swearing of the Messenger of God that he said, 'No, and I seek pardon of God'."

(14) *Iḥyāu al-'Ulūm*: "When he (the Prophet) was very upset, he touched his noble beard frequently."

(15) *Ibid*: "And he (the Prophet) was the most generous of all people; dīnār or dirham did not remain with him; if something was left with him and he did not find one to give it to him and the night came, he did not go to his house until he found someone who needed it. He did not take from what God had given to him except the food sufficient for the year from easily available dates and barley; and he put all of it in the way of God.

"He was not asked for a thing except he gave it out; then he returned

to the nourishment of the year—so much so that he often was empty-handed before the expiry of the year if nothing new came to him." He said, "And he enforced the truth even if it resulted in a harm to himself or his companions." He said, "And he used to proceed alone between his enemies without a guard." He said, "Nothing from worldly affairs ever intimidated him."

He said: "He sat with poor, took food with needy; he used to respect the people of excellence in their ethics, and was on intimate terms with the people of dignity by doing good to them. He did good to his relatives, without giving them preference over one who was superior to them; he was not harsh to anyone, he accepted the apology from one who offered it."

He said: "He had some slaves and slave girls but did not rise over them in meals or dress. He never passed a time without some work for God or for something, which was necessary for his welfare. He used to go forth to the orchards of his companions. He never looked down any poor with disdain because of his poverty or chronic illness. He was not awed by any king because of his kingdom; he called this and that towards God in equal way."

(16) *Ibid*: "And he (the Prophet) was furthest from anger and nearest in pleasantness; he was most gracious of all people towards the people, the best of all for all people, and the most beneficial of all for the people."

(17) *Ibid*: "When he (the Prophet) was happy and pleased, he was the best of the people in pleasantness; when he admonished, he admonished seriously, and when he was angry—and he was never angry except for God—nothing could stand against his anger. And he was like that in all his affairs; and when any affair occurred to him, he entrusted that to God, freed himself from power and strength, and invoked theguidance."

Author's comment: Reliance on God, entrusting the affairs to Him, freeing oneself from power and strength and invocation of guidance from Him, all of it returns one to another, and all of it sprouts from one root, and it is this: All affairs are based on the Divine Will which is the conqueror, unconquered, and His power which is the subduer, unlimited. The Book and the *Sunnah* with one voice call to it. God says: *and on Allah should the reliant rely.* (14:12); *... and I entrust my affair to Allah, ...* (40:44); ...

and whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him; ... (65:3); *... surely His is the creation and the command; ...* (7:54); *And that to your Lord is the goal,* (53:42) apart from other such verses. As for the traditions they are beyond counting.

Acquiring these ethics and learning these manners is based on the fact that they apply the human activities on the proper realities, which establish them on the natural religion. It is because in reality all affairs return to God, as He says *now surely to Allah do all affairs eventually come* (42:53). It has a magnificent benefit: When man relies and depends on God—and he recognizes His unlimited power and subduer Will—this factor strengthens man's will and builds the pillars of his determination; as such he is not affected by any hindrance which appears in the way, nor is he constrained by any difficulty or tiredness that faces him; his firm intention is not shaken by any seduction or Satanic whispering which may appear in his inner self in the form of imaginary significances.

Some of The Prophet's Customs And Manners in His Social Relations

(18) *Irshādu al-Qulūb*, al-Daylamī: "The Prophet used to patch his clothes, mend his shoes and milk his goat; he ate with slaves, sat on the earth and rode a donkey and allowed someone to sit behind him; he was not ashamed to carry his provisions from market to his family; he shook hands with rich and poor, and did not remove his hand from any one's hand until it was the opposite party who removed it; he greeted anyone who came before him, be he rich or poor, senior or junior; he never degraded what he was invited to even if it was date of inferior quality.

"And he was light of provision, noble of nature, of beautiful social relation and cheerful face; smiling without laughter, sorrowful without scowling; humble without humiliation, magnanimous without extravagance, soft-hearted, merciful to every Muslim; he never filled his stomach so that it would result in belching, and did not extend his hand to anything because of covetousness."

(19) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: It is narrated about the Prophet that he looked into mirror, let his hair grow long and combed it; sometimes he looked into water and managed his hair in this way. He used to adorn himself for his companions more than he did for

his family. And he said: "Surely God likes from His servant when he goes out for his brethren that he should prepare and beautify himself for them."

(20) *ʻIlalu al-Sharāiʻ*, *ʻUyūn Akhbāri al-Riḍā*, and *al-Majālis*: al-Ṣadūq narrates through his chain, from al-Riḍā from his forefathers that he said: "The Messenger of God said, '(There are) five (things) that I shall not leave them till I die: To eat (sitting) on the earth with slaves, my riding with someone, milking my goat by my hand, wearing wool(len dress), and greeting the children in order that it may be a custom after me.'"

(21) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: It is narrated from ʻAlī that he said to a man from Banū Saʻd: "Should not I tell you about Fāṭimah and myself? ... So came to us the Messenger of God early in the morning, and we were under our blanket; and he said: 'Peace be on you!' But we remained silent and felt shy because of our position. "Then he said: 'Peace be on you!' And we remained silent. Then he said: 'Peace be on you!' So we feared that if we did not respond (this time) he would go back. (And it was his custom that he would say *salām* three times, and if he was given permission, well and good; otherwise he would go away.) So we said: 'And on you be *salām*, O Messenger of God! Come in.' so he entered ..."

(22) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Ribʻī b. ʻAbdillāh, from Abū ʻAbdillāh that he said: "The Messenger of God used to greet (say *salām* to) the women and they gave him the reply of the *salām*, and the Leader of the Faithful used to greet the women; and he disliked to greet the young ones from among them, and used to say: 'I fear that her voice would give me pleasure and thus I would become liable to more (responsibility) than the reward I seek.'"

Author's comment: And al-Ṣadūq has narrated it as a *mursal* tradition; and so has done Sibṭ al-Ṭabrisī in *al-Mishkāt* copying from *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin*.

(23) Ibid: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from ʻAbdu al-ʻAzīm b. ʻAbdīllāh al-Ḥasanī, as a *marfūʻ* tradition. He said: "The Prophet used to sit in one of the three styles: *al-Qurfuṣā'*, that is, he raised his legs and encircled them with his hands, holding fast to the arms with the hands; and he rested on his knees; and

he doubled one leg, putting the other over it; and he was never seen cross-legged."

(24) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, copying from *Kitāb al-Nubuwwah*: It is narrated from ʿAlī that he said: "When the Messenger of God, shook hand with someone, he did not remove his hand from that one's hand until it was the other man who pulled his hand away; and no one talked with him about some need of his or for some other purpose and the Prophet went away, until that man himself was the one who went away; and no one cut his talk until that man became silent; and he was never seen extending his leg before a companion.

"And he was never given an option between two courses of action but he opted for the harder one; and he did not avenge himself for any injustice, until someone disgraced a sanctuary of God, then he shall be angry for God; he never took meal reclining (on pillow) until he departed from this world; and he was never asked for a thing and he replied in negative; no petitioner ever asked for his need, but he accepted it or (alternatively) talked to him in easy language; he was lightest of all in prayer, shortest of them in lecture and least of all in useless talk. When he came he was known by the good scent; when he ate with the people, he was the first to begin and last to stop his hand; when he ate, he ate from the side that was near him; however if it was dates, his hand roamed all over it; when he drank he divided it in three breaths; he used to sip the water, not flooding it. His right hand was for his food and drink, for his taking and giving, he did not take but by his right hand and did not give but by his right hand; and his left hand was for other functions of his body; he liked to begin with the right side in all his affairs—in wearing dress, shoes, and dismounting.

"When he called, he called three times, when he spoke, he spoke once, and when he sought permission, he did so thrice. His speech was in sections; whoever heard him clearly, understood him; when he spoke, it seemed as if a light went forth from between his teeth. When you saw him you would say (his teeth were) separated, but they were not.

"His observation was glancing with his eyes; he did not tell anyone anything, which he disliked; when he walked it was as though he

was going down a slope. He used to say: 'Surely the best of you is the best of you in ethics (manners);' he never condemned any taste nor did he praise it; and never did the speakers dispute before him. The one describing him used to say: 'I did not see with my eye anyone like him, neither before him nor after him."

(25) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain, from Jamīl b. Darrāj, from Abū 'Abdillāh that he said: "The Messenger of God divided his glance between his companions, he looked to this and to that equally." (Also he said:) "The Messenger of God never spread his legs between his companions; if someone shook his hand, the Messenger of God did not remove his own hand from that man's hand until it was he who removed his hand; so when they became aware of it, the man on shaking his hand (soon) moved his hand and removed it from the Prophet's hand."

(26) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: "When the Messenger of God said a thing, he smiled in his speech."

(27) *Ibid*: Yūnus al-Shaybānī said: "Abū 'Abdillāh said to me, 'How is your joking (and jesting) with each other?' I said, 'Very little.' He said, 'Why don't you do it?' Because joking (and jesting) is a part of good manners; and surely you introduce through it joy to your brother; and the Messenger of God used to jest with a man intending to make him happy.'"

(28) *Ibid*: Abu al-Qāsim al-Kūfī narrates in *Kitāb al-Akhlāq* from al-Ṣādiq that he said: "There is no believer but there is jesting in him; and the Messenger of God used to joke, yet he never spoke other than the truth."

(29) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Mu'ammar b. Khallād that he said: "I asked Abu al-Ḥasan and said: 'May I be made your ransom! A man (mingles) with the people and talk among them continues, they joke and laugh?' He said, 'There is no harm (in it) as long as there is no.' (So I thought that he meant 'obscenity'.)

"Then (the Imām) said, 'Surely, a Bedouin used to come to (the Messenger of God) and bring to him (some) gift; then he used to say: "Give us the price of our gift." So the Messenger of God used to laugh. And when he was distressed, he used say: "What happened to the Bedouin, would that he came to us."'"

(30) *Ibid*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Ṭalḥah b. Zayd, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The Messenger of God used to sit mostly facing *qiblah*."

(31) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: "The people used to bring a small child to the Messenger of God, so that he should pray for blessings to him; so he used to keep him in his lap in order to honor his family members; and sometimes the child urinated on him, and if someone who saw it shouted at the child, he would say: 'Don't disturb the child until he finishes urinating;' thereafter, he would complete praying for him or naming him, thus heightening the joy of his family, and they never felt that he was disturbed because of their child's urine; then when they had gone back, he would wash his clothes afterwards."

(32) *Ibid*: It is narrated that the Messenger of God never allowed anyone to walk on foot with him when he himself was riding until he made him sit with him; if the man refused, then he told him: "Proceed before me and meet me at the place you intend."

(33) *Ibid*: Abu al-Qāsim al-Kūfī writes in *Kitāb al-Akhlāq*: "It has come in traditions that the Messenger of God never took his revenge from anyone; rather he used to forgive and pardon."

(34) *Ibid*: "If a man from among his brethren remained absent for three days, the Messenger of God used to enquire about him; if he was out of town, he prayed for him; if he was present therein, he visited him; and if he was sick, he went to see him."

(35) *Ibid*: Anas said: "I served the Prophet for nine years. I have no knowledge that he ever said to me: 'Did you do such and such (thing)?' Nor did he ever criticize me for anything."

(36) *Iḥyāu al-ʿUlūm*: Anas said: "By Him Who sent him with truth! He never said to me about a thing, which he disliked: 'Why did you do it?' And his women never blamed me but he said: 'Leave him alone, it was only by a Book and destiny.'"

(37) *Ibid*: It is narrated from Anas that no one from his companions or others called him but he said: "*Labbayk*."

(38) *Ibid*: Anas said: "He (the Prophet) used to call his companions with their agnomen, in order to honor them and to win their affection; and he gave agnomen to the one who did not have any,

so he was called by that agnomen. He also allotted agnomen to the ladies who had children and even those who had not borne yet; and he also gave agnomen to the children thus softening their hearts."

(39) *Ibid*: "He (the Prophet) made a visitor sit on the cushion on which he sat; if the visitor refused to do so, he (the Prophet) adjured him until he accepted."

(40) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from ʿAjlān that he said: "I was with Abū ʿAbdillāh; a beggar came, so he went to a container of dates, and taking out a handful gave it to him; then came another, so he stood up and gave him a handful; then came a third one, he asked and the Imām stood up and taking a handful gave it to him. Thereafter came another man, and the Imām, said, 'God is our Sustainer and yours.'

"Then he said, 'Surely nobody asked anything of this world from the Messenger of God but he gave it to him. A woman said to her son, "Go to him (the Prophet) and ask from him; if he says: 'We do not have anything', then say: 'Give me your shirt'." So, the Prophet took his shirt and threw it to him. (Another version: "gave it.") Thereupon, God taught him moderation and said: *And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost* (limit) *of its stretching forth, lest you should* (afterwards) *sit down blamed, stripped off* (17:29).'"

(41) *Ibid*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Jābir, from Abū Jaʿfar that he said: "The Messenger of God used to eat gift and did not eat *ṣadaqah*.

(42) *Ibid*: It is narrated from Mūsá b. ʿImrān b. Bazīʿ that he said: "I said to al-Riḍā, 'May I be made your ransom! The people narrate that when the Messenger of God went forth by a way, he used to return by another way. Was it so?' He said, 'Yes; I do it most of the times; so you too do it.' Then he said to me, 'Well, it expands more sustenance for you."

(43) *al-Iqbāl*: Narrates from Abū Jaʿfar that he said: "The Messenger of God, used to come out after sunrise." (Ibn Ṭāwūs)

(44) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from ʿAbdullāh b. al-Mughīrah, from his narrator that he said: "When the Messenger of God entered a house, he sat in the nearest place to him on

entering."

Author's comment: Sibṭ al-Ṭabrisī has narrated it in *al-Mishkāt*, copying from *al-Maḥāsin* and other books.

(45) And among his customs and manners regarding cleanliness and adornments is what has been said in *al-Makārim* that when the Messenger of God washed his head and beard, he did so with (leaves of) lotus tree.

(46) *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*: It is narrated through his chain from Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad, from his forefathers from ʿAlī that he said: "The Messenger of God used to comb his hair and often he combed it with water, and used to say, 'Sufficient is water as perfume for a believer.'"

(47) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: (al-Ṣadūq) says: "The Messenger of God said, 'Surely the Majūs cut off their beards and increased their mustaches; and surely we trim the mustaches and let the beards grow.'"

(48) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "From among the *sunnah* is to clip the nails."

(49) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: It is narrated that to bury hair, nail and blood is from sunnah.

(50) *Ibid*: (al-Ṣadūq) narrates through his chain from Muḥammad b. Muslim that he asked Abū Jaʿfar about hair-dye. He said: 'The Messenger of God used to use hair-dye, and this is his hair with us.'"

(51) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: "The Messenger of God would apply medicinal ointments or treatments. When applying these treatments, someone would assist by covering the upper part of his body. However, when it came to the area below the waistband, the Messenger would apply the medicine himself."

(52) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: " ʿAlī said, 'Plucking out the armpit removes bad smell, and it is cleansing and sunnah ordered by the Agreeable.'"

(53) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: "He had a kohl-container, which he used every night; and his kohl was antimony."

(54) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Abū Usāmah, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "From among the customs of the

messengers is the toothbrush."

(55) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: (al-Ṣadūq) narrates through his chain from ʿAlī in the *ḥadīth* of four hundred, that he said: "And toothbrush is pleasure of God, and sunnah of the Prophet and cleansing of mouth."

Author's comment: There are very many traditions from both sects' ways about his, cleansing the teeth with toothbrush.

(56) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: al-Ṣādiq said: "Four (things) are from among the ethics of the prophets: To use scents, to cleanse (pubic hair) with razor, to shave the body with depilatory agent and going to women very often."

(57) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from ʿAbdullāh b. Sinān, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The Messenger of God had a holding (handle); when he performed the ritual ablution, he caught it with his wet hand; so when he came out they knew that it was the Messenger of God."

(58) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: "Never was a scent presented to him but he used it, and he used to say, 'Its air is agreeable and its load light;' and if he did not use that scent, he put his finger in it, then licked it."

(59) *Ibid*: "He used to burn incense with *qamarī* sticks."

(60) *Dhakhīrat al-Maʿād*: "Any (type of) musk was the most agreeable scent to him."

(61) *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Isḥāq al-Ṭawīl al-ʿAṭṭār, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The Messenger of God used to spend on scent more than he spent on food."

(62) *Ibid*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The Leader of the Faithful said, '(Applying) scent to mustache is among the prophets' ethics and is honor to the two writer angels.'"

(63) *Ibid*: Through his chains from al-Sakan al-Khazzāz that he said: "I heard Abū ʿAbdillāh as saying, 'It is the right on every pubescent person on every Friday to trim his mustache and nails, and rub a little scent; and when the Messenger of God did not have any scent on a Friday, he called for a veil of one of his wives, then wetting it with water put it on his face."

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(64) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: (al-Ṣadūq) narrates through his chain from Isḥāq b. ʿAmmār, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "When the Messenger of God was brought a scent on the day of ʿĪdu al-Fiṭr, he began with his women."

(65) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: "And he used various types of oil," (he said), "and he generally used the oil of violet and used to say: 'It is the best of oils.'"

(66) Among his manners in travelling were what are narrated in *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, through his chain from ʿAbdullāh b. Sinān, from Abū Jaʿfar that he said: "The Messenger of God used to travel on Thursday."

Author's comment: There are many *aḥādīth* of this meaning.

(67) *Amānu al-Akhṭār* and *Miṣbāḥ al-Zāir*: The author of *Awārifu al-Maʿārif* has written: "Surely when the Prophet travelled, he took with him five things: Mirror, kohl-container, winnowing fork, and toothbrush." (He said: "Another tradition says:) 'and scissors'."

Author's comment: It has also been narrated in *Makārimu al-akhlāq* and *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*.

(68) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: It is narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās that he said: "When the Messenger of God walked, he did so in a manner which showed that he was neither weak nor tired."

(69) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: Narrates through his chain from Muʿāwiyah b. ʿAmmār, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "When during journey, the Messenger of God proceeded down a slope, he said: '*Lā ilāha illa 'llāh*'; and when he ascended, he said: '*Allahu Akbar.*'"

(70) *Lubbu al-Lubāb,* (by al-Rāwandī): It is narrated from the Prophet, that he did not depart from a station but prayed therein two *rakʿah*s; and said: "So that it will testify for me of prayer."

(71) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: He says: "When the Messenger of God bid farewell to the believers, he used to say: 'May God give you sustenance of piety, and direct you to every good, and fulfil every need of yours, and keep safe your religion and your world for you, and bring you back safely to those who are successful.'"

Author's comment: There are different traditions about his prayer at

the time of bidding farewell, yet despite their differences, all contain the prayer of safety and success.

(72) *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*: It narrates through his chain from Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad, from his forefathers, from ʿAlī that the Messenger of God used to say to the one arriving from Mecca: "May God accept your rituals, and forgive your sin, and replenish your expenses to you."

(73) Among his manners regarding dresses and what pertains to them, is what is written in *Iḥyāu al-ʿulūm*:

"He used to wear the dress that was available, be it loin-cloth or cloak, shirt or *jubbah*, etc. He liked green dresses, yet most of his dresses were white, and he used to say: 'Dress it to your living and shroud in it your dead.'

"He used to wear stuffed *qabā'* (outer garment) for war and at other times; he had a *qabā'* of silk brocade, when he wore it, its green color contrasted beautifully with his white color; all his dresses were turned up above the ankles, and the loin-cloak reached above it up to middle of the leg; his shirt was buttoned up, and sometime he opened the buttons in prayer.

"He had a wrapper dyed in saffron; sometimes he prayed with the people wearing that alone; at other times he wore only the cloak without adding any other thing; he had a felt cloak which he wore and said: 'I am but a slave, I wear like slaves.' He had two dresses reserved for Fridays, separate from his dresses of the other days. Sometimes he wore one cloak alone, and tied its two corners between his shoulders; often he prayed in it with the people in funeral prayer; sometimes he prayed in his house in the one cloak wrapping it around keeping its sides crossed; and it could be the cloak which he had used during sexual intercourse; he often prayed at night in the cloak only and put on part of the dress that adjoined his fringe, and left the other portion on one of his wives and prayed.

"And he had a black cloak, then he gave it (to someone); so Umm Salamah said to him, 'May my father and mother be made your ransom! What happened to that black cloak?' He said, 'I put it on (someone).' So she said, 'I had never seen anything more beautiful than your whiteness on its blackness.' Anas said, 'And often I saw him praying with us the *ẓuhr* prayer, wearing a cloak, tying its two sides; and he used to wear ring, and sometimes he came out having

tied a thread on his ring for remembering something; and he used to seal the letters with it and said, "Seal on the letter is better than insinuation."'

"And he used to wear a skull-cap under his turban, or without turban; and often he removed his skull-cap from his head and used it as a cover before him and prayed towards it. Sometimes he did not have a turban, so he tied head-band on his head and forehead; and he had a turban named *saḥāb* (cloud), then he gifted it to ʿAlī. Sometimes ʿAlī appeared in it, then he (the Prophet) used to say: 'Alī is coming to you in the cloud.'

"And when he put on a dress, he began from its right side, and said: 'All praise is due to God Who clothed me with what I cover my shame, and beautify myself among the people;' and when he undressed, he removed it from his left side; When he wore a new dress, he gave the old one to a needy person and then said: 'There is no Muslim who covers a Muslim with his worn out dress—not doing it except for God—but he will be in God's security, guaranty and good as long as it would cover him, dead or alive.'

"And he had a ground-spread of leather stuffed with palm-frond, its length was two arms or so, and breadth one and a half arms or so; and he had a cloak spread for him, wherever he moved, it was folded twice under him; and he slept on mat, there was nothing else under him.

"And it was among his manners to give name to his riding animals, arms and provisions. The name of his standard was *ʿuqāb* (eagle), and his sword, which he took with him in wars, was named Dhu al-Fiqār; he had a third sword called al-Mukhdhim, and yet another, called al-Rasūb and al-Qaḍīb; the grip of his sword was gilded with silver. He wore a leather-belt which had three silver rings; his bow was named al-Katūm, and the quiver al-Kāfūr; his she-camel's name was al-ʿAḍbā', his mule was al-Duldul, his donkey was Yaʿfūr; and his milking goat, whose milk he drank was called ʿAynah.

"He had a cleansing pot of clay, which he used for performing ritual ablution and drinking. People used to send their small children (who had reached the age of understanding) to the Messenger of God, and they were not prevented from approaching him; so if they found in that pot some water, they drank from it and wiped it on their faces and bodies, seeking blessings with it."

(74) *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*: It is narrated from Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad, from his forefathers from ʿAlī that he said: "The Messenger of God wore quilted caps He had a shield called Dhātu al-Fuḍūl, it had three silver links, one in front and two at the back."

(75) *al-ʿAwālī*: It is narrated that he had a black turban, in which he used to pray.

Author's comment: It is narrated that his turban had three, or five, coils.

(76) *al-Khiṣāl*: Narrates through his chain from ʿAlī in the *ḥadīth* of four hundred that he said: "Wear cotton dresses, because it is the dress of the Messenger of God, and he did not wear hair or wool except during sickness."

Author's comment: al-Ṣadūq has also narrated it as a *mursal ḥadīth*; al-Ṣafwānī has narrated it in *Kitāb al-Taʿrīf*; it clarifies the meaning of what was earlier said about his wearing wool, and that there is no contradiction.

(77) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: Narrates through his chain from Ismāʿil b. Muslim, from al-Ṣādiq from his father that he said: "The Messenger of God had a short spear with a crutch at its end; he leaned on it, and took it out on the two *ʿīd* days and (fixing it before him) he prayed towards it."

Author's comment: It has also been narrated in *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*.

(78) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Hishām b. Sālim from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The ring of the Messenger of God was from silver."

(79) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Abū Khadījah that he said: "He (the Imām) said, 'The stone of the ring is round.' Then he said, 'Like this was the ring of the Messenger of God.'"

(80) *al-Khiṣāl*: Narrates through his chain from ʿAbdu al-Raḥīm b. Abi al-Bilād, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The Messenger of God had two rings (seals), on one of them was written: *Lā ilāha illa ʿllāh, Muḥammadun Rasūlu ʿllāh*; and on the other (was): *Ṣadaqa ʿllāh.*"

(81) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Ḥusayn b. Khālid, from Abu al-Ḥasan II *inter alia* in a *ḥadīth*: "Surely the Prophet and the Leader of the Faithful, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and the Imāms (peace be upon them) wore the rings in the right hand."

(82) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: It is narrated from al-Ṣādiq from ʿAlī (peace be upon both) that he said: "The Prophets used to wear shirt before trouser."

Author's comment: It is also narrated in *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*; there are other traditions on the above themes.

(83) Among his manners regarding his residence and its related things are what is written in *Kitāb al-Taḥṣīn* (by Ibn Fahd) that he said: "The Messenger of God, left this world and never put a brick over a brick."

(84) *Lubbu al-Lubāb*: "He, said, 'Mosques are the sitting places of the prophets.'"

(85) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from al-Sakūnī, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "When the Prophet came out from the house in the summer, he did so on a Thursday; and when he wanted to enter because of cold in the winter, he entered on a Friday."

Author's comment: It has also been narrated in *al-Khiṣāl* as a *mursal* one.

(86) *al-ʿUdadu al-Qawiyyah* (by al-Shaykh ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Muṭahhar, brother of al-ʿAllāmah, may God have mercy on both): Narrates from Khadījah, may God be pleased with her, that she said: "When the Prophet entered the house, he used to call for a receptacle, and cleansed for prayer, then he stood up and prayed two short *rakʿahs*; then he came to his bed."

(87) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from ʿAbbād b. Ṣuhayb, that he said: "I heard Abū ʿAbdillāh as saying, 'The Messenger of God never hatched any plan against an enemy.'"

(88) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: "The bedding of the Messenger of God was a cloak, and his pillow was of leather stuffed with palm-fronds; one night it was folded double, when morning came, he said: 'This bedding prevented me last night from prayer;' so he ordered that it should be kept unfolded; and he had a bedding of leather stuffed with palm-fronds. Also, he had a cloak which was spread for him wherever he went and it was folded double."

(89) Ibid: Abū Jaʿfar said: "Never did the Messenger of God wake up from sleep but prostrated in *sajdah* of God."

(90) Among his manners regarding matrimony and children was what is narrated in the tract of *al-Muḥkam wa al-mutashābih* of al-Murtaḍā, through his chain up to *al-Tafsīr* of al-Nuʿmānī, from ʿAlī that he said: "A group of the Companions had forbidden to themselves women, eating during the day and sleeping at night. Umm Salamah gave this news to the Messenger of God, so he went out to his Companions and said, 'Do you feel aversion from women? But surely I go to the women, and eat during the day and sleep at night; so whoever dislikes my sunnah is not from me ' "

Author's comment: This meaning is narrated in the books of both sects through many ways.

(91) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Isḥāq b. ʿAmmār, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "Among the ethics of the Prophets is the love of women."

(92) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Bakār b. Kardam and several (others), from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The Messenger of God said, 'The delight of my eyes is made in prayer and my enjoyment in women.'"

Author's comment: Nearer to it is what has been narrated through other ways.

(93) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: "When the Messenger of God wanted to marry a woman he used to send to her someone who looked at her."

(94) *al-Tafsīr,* al-ʿAyyāshī: It is narrated from al-Ḥusayn, son of the daughter of Ilyās, that he said: "I heard Abu al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā saying, 'Surely God has made the night time for rest, and He has made the women means for rest; and it is a part of sunnah to perform marriage at night and give food (to people).'"

(95) *al-Khiṣāl*: Narrates through his chain from ʿAlī, *inter alia*, in the *ḥadīth* of four hundred, that he said: "Shave the heads of your children on the seventh day, and give, equal in weight to their hair, silver as *ṣadaqah* to a Muslim; and likewise had done the Messenger of God with al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn and all his children."

(96) Among his manners regarding food and drink and related to the table, is what has been narrated in *al-Kāfī*, through his chain from Hishām b. Sālim and another one, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he

said: "There was nothing more liked by the Messenger of God, than that he should remain hungry (and) afraid regarding God."

(97) *al-Iḥtijāj*: Narrates through his chain from Mūsá b. Jaʿfar, from his forefathers, from al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī (peace be upon them), inter alia, in a lengthy *ḥadīth*, concerning the questions of a Syrian Jew from the Leader of the Faithful: "... The Jew said to him, 'They believe about Jesus that he was ascetic.' ʿAlī said to him, 'He was like that, and Muḥammad was the most ascetic of all prophets; he had thirteen wives, apart from the slave-girls who were under his possession; and yet no table-cloth was raised for him that had a food on it; and he never ate wheat bread, nor did he eat his full three nights consequently from barley bread.' ..."

(98) *al-Amālī*, al-Ṣadūq: Narrates from al-ʿĪṣ b. al-Qāsim that he said:"I said to al-Ṣādiq, 'A *ḥadīth* is narrated from your father that he said, "The Messenger of God never ate his full from wheat bread." Is it correct?' He said, 'No, the Messenger of God never ate wheat bread, and never ate his full from barley bread.'"

(99) *al-Daʿawāt* (by al-Rāwandī): He said, "It is narrated that the Messenger of God never ate (while) reclining except once, then he sat down (straight) and said, 'O God! I am your servant and your Messenger.'"

Author's comment: This meaning has been narrated by al-Kulaynī, al-Shaykh (through many chains), al-Ṣadūq, al-Barqī and al-Ḥusayn b. Saʿīd (in *Kitāb al-Zuhd*).

(100) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Zayd al-Shaḥḥām, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The Messenger of God never ate reclining since God raised him (as Prophet) until he expired; he used to eat like a slave and sit like a slave." "I said, 'Why?' He said, 'In humility to God, to Whom belong Might and Majesty.'"

(101) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Abū Khadījah who said: "Bashīr al-Dahhān asked Abū ʿAbdillāh and I was present (there), 'Did the Messenger of God used to eat reclining upon his right or left side?' He said, 'The Messenger of God never used to eat reclining upon his right or left side, but he used to sit like a slave.' I said, 'For what (he did so)?' He said, 'In humility to God, to Whom belong Might and Majesty.'"

(102) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Jābir, from Abū Jaʿfar, that he said: "The Messenger of God used to eat like a slave and sit like a slave; and he used to eat on the ground and sleep on the ground."

(103) *Iḥyāu al-ʿUlūm*: "When he (the Prophet) sat for eating, he gathered his knees and legs as one does in prayer, except that a knee was over the other and a foot was over the other; and he used to say, 'I am but a slave, I eat as a slave eats and sit as a slave sits.'"

(104) *Kitāb al-Taʿrīf* (by al-Ṣafwānī): Narrates from ʿAlī: "When the Messenger of God sat on a table, he sat like a slave and he reclined upon his left thigh."

(105) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: It is narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās that he said: "The Prophet used to sit on the earth, tether the goat and accept the invitation of a slave."

(106) *al-Maḥāsin*: Through his chain from Ḥammād b. ʿUthmān, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The Messenger of God used to lick his fingers when he ate."

(107) *al-Iḥtijāj*: Copying from the book, *Mawālīd al-Ṣādiqīn* that he said: "The Prophet used to eat all types of food; and he ate what God had made lawful for him with his family and servants when they ate; and with whoever invited him from among the Muslims for eating; and on whatever they partook of (that is, table or plate) and whenever they ate, except when a guest came to them, then he ate with his guest. And the most agreeable food to him was that which was (taken) with a lot of dependents."

(108) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Ibn al-Qadāḥ from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "When the Messenger of God took any meal with the people, he was the first to put his hand (in the food) and the last to remove it, in order that the people should eat (their full)."

(109) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain to Muḥammad b. Muslim, from Abū Jaʿfar that he said: "The Leader of the Faithful (peace be upon him) has said, 'The prophets' evening meal is after *'ishā'* prayer; therefore you should not leave (neglect) evening meal, because surely leaving the evening meal ruins the body.'"

(110) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from ʿAnbasah b. Najād, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "No food, in which contained dates,

was presented to the Messenger of God but he began with dates."

(111) *al-Kāfī* and *Ṣaḥīfat al-Riḍā*: Narrate through their chains from his forefathers (peace be upon them) that he said: "When the Messenger of God ate dates, he put the stone on the back of his palm, and than threw it away."

(112) *al-Iqbāl* (Ibn Ṭāwūs): Copying from the second part of *Tārīkh al-Nāysābūrī* (in the biography of al-Ḥasan b. Bashar), through his chain, that he said: "The Messenger of God used to thank God between every two morsels."

(113) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain, from Wahb b. ʿAbd Rabbih, that he said: "I saw Abū ʿAbdillāh using tooth-pick. I looked at him; so he said, 'Surely the Messenger of God used tooth-pick; and it makes the mouth pleasant.'"

(114) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: It is narrated from the Prophet that when he drank, began saying *tasmiyah*[1]... and he sipped the water slowly without swallowing the lot; and he used to say, "Liver ailment is from swallowing."

(115) *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*: Narrates from Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad, from his forefathers, from ʿAlī that he said: "I checked the Prophet several times and (found that) when he drank he breathed three times, with every breath he recited: *Bismi ʿllāh* ... to begin with, and: *al-ḥamdu li ʿllāh* at the end; so I asked him about it, and he said, 'O ʿAlī! (It is) to thank God with: *al-ḥamdu li ʿllāh*, and *tasmiyah* is for (protection from) sickness.'"

(116) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: "He did not breathe into the pot when he drank; and if he wanted to breathe, he kept the pot away from his mouth until he breathed."

(117) *Iḥyāu al-ʿUlūm*: "And when he ate meat, he did not lower his head to it; he used to raise it to his mouth properly then tore it to pieces." Then he said, "And when he ate meat especially, he washed both his hands thoroughly then wiped his face with the water left overhand."

(118) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: It is narrated about the Prophet that he used to eat various kinds of food.

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1 To say: *Bismi ʿllāhi al-Raḥmāni al-Raḥīm*.

Author's comment: Thereafter al-Ṭabrisī has described several types of food which he used to eat, like, bread, meat (of various types), melon, water-melon, sugar, grapes, pomegranate, date, milk, harīsah[1], ghee, vinegar, wild chicory and cabbage. It is narrated that he liked dates; also that he loved honey; another narration says that the most loved fruit for him was pomegranate.

(119) *al-Amālī*, al-Ṭūsī: Narrates through his chain, from Abū Usāmah, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The (staple) food of the Messenger of God was barley when he found it, and his sweetmeat was dates, and his firewood was palm-leaves."

(120) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: It is narrated about the Prophet that he did not eat hot (food) until it became cold, and he used to say: "Surely God has not fed us fire, certainly hot food does not have *barakah*." And when he ate, he said: "*Bismi 'llāh*"; and he used to eat with three fingers, and from the side that was close to him, and he did not take from that (side) which was adjacent to another person. When food was brought before him, he began before the others, and then they began. He used to eat with three fingers—the thumb, the one adjacent to it and the middle finger, and sometimes took help from the fourth. He used to eat with his entire palm, and he never ate with two fingers. And he used to say: "Eating with two fingers is the Satan's eating." And one day his companions brought *fālūdhaj* and he ate (it) with them, and then said, "From what is it made?" They said, "We mix ghee and honey and it comes to this as you see." He said, "It is a good food."

And he used to eat bread made of unsieved barley floor; and he never ate wheat bread, nor did he eat his full with barley bread; and he never ate on a table-cloth until he died. And, he used to eat water-melon and grapes; and he ate dates and fed its stone to the goat; and he never ate garlic, onion, leek or the honey which had *maghāfīr*; and *maghāfīr* is a residue of the tree that remains in the bee's stomach, and it throws it into the honey; so its smell remains in the mouth.

And he never criticized any food—if he liked it, he ate it; and if he disliked it, he left it, but did not make it unlawful to others; and

1 A sweet pastry made of flour, melted butter and sugar. (Trans.)

he used to lick out the bowl and said, "The last part of the plate is the greatest food in *barakah*." When he finished, he used to lick his three fingers (with which he ate) one by one; and he used to wash his hand from the food until it became clean; and he never took food alone.

Author's comment: The expression, the thumb, the one adjacent to it and the middle finger, shows the beautiful manner of the narrator, because he did not say, the thumb and the *sabbābah*[1] avoiding to call a finger of the Prophet reviler or rebuker.

What is narrated here that he ate from the *fālūdhaj*, goes against what has been narrated in *al-Maḥāsin*, with its chain, from Yaʿqūb b. Shuʿayb, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "While the Leader of the Faithful was in al-Raḥbah with a group of his companions, a dish of *fālūdhaj* was presented to him as gift. He said to his companions, 'Extend your hands;' so they extended their hands and he too extended his, then he withdrew it and said, 'I (just) remembered that the Messenger of God had never eaten it, so I did not like to eat it.'"

(121) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: He said: "The Prophet used to drink from the bowls of glass, which were brought from Syria; and he drank from bowls, which were made from wood, hides and earthen ware."

Author's comment: Near to its earlier part is narrated in *al-Kāfī* and *al-Maḥāsin*, and there is in it: "and he liked to drink from Syrian bowl, and he used to say: 'It is the cleanest of your vessels.'"

(122) *Ibid*: It is narrated about the Prophet that he used to drink from his palm (and water was poured in it), and he used to say: "There is no vessel cleaner than hand."

(123) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from ʿAbdullāh b. Sinān that he said: "The Messenger of God used to slaughter two rams on the day of al-Aḍḥā, one for himself and the other on behalf of those who did not have means from his *ummah*."

(124) And among his manners regarding toilet is what is written in *Sharḥu al-Nafliyyah* (of the Second Martyr) about the Prophet

1 *Sabbābah* = Index finger. Literally it means, the (finger) used in reviling, rebuking. It was not a good manner to call a finger of the Prophet the reviler/rebuker. (Trans.)

that he was never seen (engaged in) urinating or relieving bowel.

(125) *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*: Narrates through his chain from Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad, from his forefathers, from ʿAlī that he said: "Verily, when the Messenger of God wanted to discard mucous he covered his head, then buried that, and when he wanted to spit, he did like that, and when he wanted to relieve bowel, he covered his head."

Author's comment: Constructing the toilet appeared in Arabia after Islam; before that they used to go forth to open spaces, as is inferred from some traditions.

(126) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from al-Ḥusayn b. Khālid, from Abu al-Ḥasan II, that he said: "I said to him, 'A *ḥadīth* has been narrated to us that the Messenger of God used to do *istinjā*'[1] and his ring was in his finger, and so was done by the Leader of the Faithful; and the engraving on the seal of the Messenger of God was: "Muḥammad the Messenger of God."' The Imām said, 'They speak truth.' I said, 'So we too should do (like that)?' He said, 'Surely they wore the ring (seal) in the right hand and you wear it in the left.'"

Author's comment: Near to it is narrated in *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*, and in *al-Makārim* copying from *Kitāb al-Libās* (of al-ʿAyyāshī) from al-Ṣādiq.

(127) And among his manners at the time of calamities and trials and regarding dead bodies and related matters are what are narrated in *al-Makārim*: "Whenever the Messenger of God saw a pimple in his body, he sought refuge with God and showed humility and fervently prayed to Him. They used to say to him: 'O Messenger of God! There is no problem in it;' and he used to say: 'Surely, when God wants to magnify a small thing, it becomes great, and when He wants to reduce a great thing, it becomes small.'"

(128) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Jābir, from Abū Jaʿfar that he said: "The *sunnah* is to carry the bier on its four sides; and whatever carrying is done in addition to it, is voluntary."

(129) *Qurbu al-Asnād*: It is narrated from al-Ḥusayn b. Ṭurayf, from al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlwān from Jaʿfar, from his father, that al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī (peace be upon both) was sitting and there were some of

1 Cleansing after discharge of urine and/or relieve of bowel. (Trans.)

his companions with him; then a funeral procession passed from there; some of the people stood up and al-Ḥasan did not stand. When they went away, some people said to him, "Why did you not stand up? May God preserve your health! Because the Messenger of God used to stand up for a bier when they passed with it." So, al-Ḥasan said, "The Messenger of God had stood up only once; it happened that a Jew's bier was proceeding and the place was con-fined, so the Messenger of God stood up and he did not like that the bier should rise above his head."

(130) *al-Da'awāt*, al-Quṭb: He said that when the Prophet followed a bier, he was overcome by grief, did much talking to himself, and did not talk much.

(131) *al-Ja'fariyyāt*: Narrates through his chain from Ja'far b. Muḥammad, from his forefathers from 'Alī (peace be upon them) that the Messenger of God used to scatter three handfuls of earth on a grave.

(132) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Zurārah, from Abū Ja'far that he said: "The Messenger of God used to do especially with someone dying from among the Hāshimites a thing which he did not do with any of the (other) Muslims; when he prayed (funeral) prayer of the Hāshimite and his grave was sprinkled with water, the Messenger of God put his palm on the grave until (the marks of) his fingers could be seen on the wet earth; so if a stranger or a traveller from the people of Medina arrived and saw a new grave with marks of the palm of the Messenger of God he would ask, 'Who has died from the progeny of Muḥammad?'"

(133) *Musakkin al-Fuād* (of the Second Martyr): Narrates from 'Alī that when the Messenger of God condoled, he said: "May God give you (its) reward and have mercy on you"; and when he congratulated, he said: "May God bless you and send His blessings to you."

(134) And among his manners concerning *wuḍū'* and bath is what is narrated in *Āyāt al-aḥkām* (of al-Quṭb) from Sulaymān b. Buraydah, from his father, that the Prophet used to perform *wuḍū'* for each prayer; when it was the year of victory he prayed his prayers with one *wuḍū'*, 'Umar said, "O Messenger of God! You have done something, which you had not done (before)." He said,

"Intentionally have I done it."

(135) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Zurārah, that he said: "Abū Jaʿfar said, 'Should not I relate to you the *wuḍū'* of the Messenger of God?' We said, 'Certainly.' So, he called for a basin with some water and put it in front of him; then he uncovered his arms; then he dipped his right palm in it and said, 'Like this (will be done) when the palm is clean'; he then scooped up a handful of water and put it on his forehead, and said, 'In the name of God'; and let it fall down to the sides of his beard, then he passed his hand once on his face and forehead; then he dipped his left palm and scooped up a handful and put it on his right arm, then passed his hand on his forearm until the water flowed to his fingertips; then he dipped his right palm and scooped up a handful and put it on his left arm, and passed his hand on his (left) forearm until the water flowed to his fingertips; then he wiped the front part of his head and backs of his feet with the wetness of his left hand and the residue of the wetness of the right hand."

He said: "And Abū Jaʿfar said, 'Surely God is odd and likes odd (number); sufficient then for you in *wuḍū'* is three dippings: one for the face and two for the two forearms, and you will wipe the forepart of your head with the wetness of your right hand, and with the residue of that wetness the back of your right foot, and will wipe with the wetness of your left hand the back of your left foot.'"

Zurārah said: "Abū Jaʿfar said, 'A man had asked the Leader of the Faithful about the *wuḍu'* of the Messenger of God so he demonstrated to him like this.'"

Author's comment: This theme is narrated from Zurārah, Bukayr and others through numerous ways; have narrated it al-Kulaynī, al-Ṣadūq, al-Shaykh, al-ʿAyyāshī, al-Mufīd, al-Karājikī and others; and traditions of Ahlu al-Bayt (peace be upon them) for this matter are *mustafīḍah*, nearly *mutawātir*.

(136) *al-Amālī* (by Mufīd al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī): Narrates through his chain from Abū Hurayrah that when the Prophet performed *wuḍū'*, he began with his right side.

(137) *al-Tahdhīb*: Narrates through his chains from Abū Baṣīr that he said, "I asked Abū ʿAbdillāh about *wuḍū'*. He said, 'The Messenger

of God used to perform *wuḍū'* with a *mudd*[1] of water, and take bath with a *ṣā'*[2]'"

Author's comment: A similar tradition is narrated through another way from Abū Ja'far.

(138) *al-'Uyūn*: Narrates through his chains from al-Riḍā, from his forefathers (peace be upon them), inter alia in a lengthy *ḥadīth*: "The Messenger of God said, 'Surely, we Ahlu al-Bayt, *ṣadaqah* is not allowed to us, and we have been ordered to perform *wuḍū'* properly, and we do not make an ass jump on a she-ass.'"

(139) *al-Tahdhīb*: Narrates through his chains from 'Abdullāh b. Sinān, from Abū 'Abdillāh that he said: "Gargling and rinsing the nose is among what the Messenger of God has made sunnah."

(140) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Mu'āwiyah b. 'Ammār that he said: "I heard Abū 'Abdillāh saying, 'The Messenger of God used to do *ghusl* (bath) with one *ṣā'* (of water); and if one of his women was with him, he did *ghusl* with a *ṣā'* and a *mudd*.'"

Author's comment: al-Kulaynī has narrated this meaning in *al-Kāfī*, through his chain from Muḥammad b. Muslim from the Imām, and there it elaborates that both did *ghusl* from one vessel; and likewise is narrated by al-Shaykh through another chain.

(141) *al-Ja'fariyyāt*: Narrates through his chain from Ja'far b. Muḥammad from his father (peace be upon both) that he said: "al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad asked Jābir b. 'Abdillāh about the bath of the Messenger of God, Jābir said, 'The Messenger of God, used to scoop water (with his hand) on his head three times.' al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad said, 'I have a lot of hair (on my head), as you see.' Jābir said, 'O noble man! Do not say so, because the hair of the Messenger of God was thicker and more fragrant.'"

(142) al-Hidāyah (by al-Ṣadūq): "al-Ṣādiq said, 'The *ghusl* of Friday is *sunnah wājibah* for men and women in journey and in presence ...' And al-Ṣādiq said, '*Ghusl* of Friday is purity and atonement of sins from Friday to Friday.' He (also) said, 'The reason of (laying

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1 *Mudd*: A measure of varying quantity in various countries, in *fiqh* it denotes 3/4 kg.

2 *Ṣā'*: Nearly 3 kg.

down of) Friday bath was this: That the Helpers (Anṣār) used to work for their camels and properties; when Friday came, they came (direct) to the mosque and the people got annoyed with smell of their armpits. So, God ordered the Prophet to take bath, and thus the *sunnah* was established.'"

Author's comment: Concerning his customs regarding *ghusl*, traditions have been narrated for the *ghusl* of the day of Fiṭr and similar baths in all the *'īd*s and numerous other baths; probably some of them will be mentioned later on, God willing.

(143) And among his manners and *sunnah*s concerning prayer and related matters is what is narrated in *al-Kāfī*, through his chain from al-Fuḍayl b. Yasār, 'Abdu al-Malik and Bukayr, that they said: "We heard Abū 'Abdillāh saying, 'The Messenger of God used to perform supererogatory prayers double of the obligatory, and keep supererogatory fast double of the obligatory.'"

Author's comment: al-Shaykh too has narrated it.

(144) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Ḥanān that he said: "'Amr bḤurayth asked Abū 'Abdillāh, and I was sitting there, he said, 'May I be made your ransom! Please tell me about the prayer of the Messenger of God.' He said, 'The Prophet used to pray eight *rak'ah*s of noon, and four of the first (that is, *ẓuhr*), and eight after it and four of *'aṣr*, and three of *maghrib* and four after *maghrib*, and *'ishā'* the last four, and eight *tahajjud* and three (*shafa'* and) *witr*, and two *rak'ah*s (*nāfilah*) of *fajr* and dawn prayer two *rak'ah*s.'"I said, 'May I be made your ransom! If I have strength to pray more than that, will God punish me for excess of prayer?' He said, 'No; but He will punish you for leaving the *sunnah*.'"

Author's comment: This tradition shows that the two *rak'ahs* in sitting position prayed after *'ishā'* prayer are not part of fifty (*rak'ahs*), but with them the number, fifty-one, is completed, counting them as equal to one *rak'ah* in standing position. Rather it was laid down as a substitute of the *witr*, in case the death came before he could stand up for *witr*; as al-Kulaynī (may God have mercy on him), has narrated in *al-Kāfī*, through his chain, from Abū Baṣīr from Abū 'Abdillāh that he said: "Whoever believes in God and the Last Day, should not sleep (at night) without (praying) *witr*." "I said, 'You mean the two *rak'ahs* after the *'ishā'*?' He said,

'Yes; they are counted as one *rak'ah*; whoever prayed them, then something happened to him (that is, he died), he would die on *witr*; and if death did not happen to him, he would pray *witr* in the last period of the night.'

"I said, 'Did the Messenger of God prayed these two *rak'ah*s?' He said, 'No.' I said, 'Why?' He said, 'Because the Messenger of God used to receive revelation, and he knew whether he would die in that night or not, while others do not know it. That was why he did not pray them, and ordered (the people) to pray them.' ..."

Probably the statement that he did not pray them, means that he did not pray them regularly, rather on some nights he prayed and on others he left them, as is inferred from some other traditions. In this way, it would not go against what has been narrated that he used to pray them.

(145) *al-Tahdhīb*: Narrates through his chain from Zurārah that he said: "I heard Abū Ja'far saying, 'The Messenger of God was not praying in day time until the noon; when the shadow reached (towards the east) about half a finger, he prayed eight *rak'ah*s; then when the shadow reached an arm's length, he prayed *ẓuhr*; then after *ẓuhr* he prayed two *rak'ahs*, and he used to pray two *rak'ahs* before the time of *'aṣr*; when the shadow extended to two arm-lengths, he prayed *'aṣr*; and he prayed *maghrib* after sunset; when the reddish color (in the sky) vanished the time of *'ishā'* came; the last time of *maghrib* is the end of the reddish color; when the reddish color vanished the time of *'ishā'* came, and the end of the *'ishā'* time is one third of the night.

"'And he did not pray after *'ishā'* until midnight, thereafter he prayed thirteen *rak'ahs* including the *witr* and two *rak'ah*s of *nāfilah* of *fajr*; then at dawn break he prayed the morning prayer.'"

Author's comment: This tradition does not describe fully the *nāfilah* of *'aṣr*; and it is known from other traditions.

(146) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Mu'āwiyah b. Wahb that he said: "I heard Abū 'Abdillāh saying, and he was describing the prayer of the Prophet; he said, 'The cleansing (water) was brought to the Prophet, and covered (and put) near his head, and his teeth-cleansing small stick was put under his bed; then he slept as long as God wished; when he awoke, he sat up, then turned his eyes in the sky, then recited some verses from (Ch. of) "The House of

ʿImrān": *Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men who understand* (3:190). Then he cleansed his teeth and performed cleansing, then proceeded to the mosque and prayed four *rakʿah*s, equal to his recitation was his *rukūʿ*, and equal to his *rukūʿ* was his *sajdah*; he remained in *rukūʿ* until it was said: "When will he raise his head?" and he remained in *sajdah* until it was said: "When will he raise his head?"

"'Then he returned to his bed and slept as long as God wished; then he woke up, and sat up; then he recited the verses from "The House of ʿImrān," and turned his eyes in the sky, then cleansing the teeth, he performed (ritual) ablution, then proceeded to the mosque and prayed four *rakʿah*s like he did before.

"'Then he returned to his bed and slept as long as God wished; then he woke up and sat up; then he recited verses from "The House of ʿImrān," and turned his eyes in the sky; then cleansing his teeth, he performed (ritual) ablution, then proceeded to the mosque and prayed two *rakʿah*s, then went forth for prayer.'"

Author's comment: This meaning has also been narrated in *al-Kāfī* from two chains.

(147) It is narrated that he used to make the *nāfilah* of the dawn prayer short, he used to pray it in the beginning of the *fajr* and then proceeded to the (*wajib*) prayer.

(148) *al-Maḥāsin*: Narrates through his chain from ʿUmar b. Yazīd, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "Whoever, while praying witr, said in it seventy times: 'I seek pardon of God, my Lord, and repent to Him', and keeps doing it diligently, until he completes a year, God writes him among those who seek pardon in early dawn. "And the Messenger of God used to seek God's pardon in the witr seventy times, and used to say seven times: 'This is the stand of him who seeks Your refuge from the Fire.' ..."

(149) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: "The Prophet used to say in the *qunūt* of *witr*: 'O God! Guide me among those whom You guided, and give me remission among those whom You remitted, and take care of me among those You cared for, and give me *barakah* in what You have given me, and protect me from the evil of what You have decreed; surely You do decide and no one decides against

You; Glory be to Thee, O Lord of the House! I seek Your pardon and return to You, and I believe in You and rely on You; and there is no strength or power except with You. O Merciful!'"

(150) *al-Tahdhīb*: Narrates through his chain from Abū Khadījah from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "When the month of Ramaḍān came, the Messenger of God used to increase in prayer, and I too increase; therefore, you too should increase."

Author's comment: The Imām means by this increase, the thousand *rakʿahs* of *tarāwīḥ*, the *nāfilah* of the month of Ramaḍān, which the Messenger of God used to pray in addition to the fifty *rakʿahs* of daily *nawāfil*; many traditions have been narrated as to how to pray it and how to divide it on the Ramaḍān nights; and it has come through the chains of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) that the Prophet used to pray it without congregation, and prohibited praying it with congregation. He used to say: "There is no congregation in *nāfilah*." And there are other especial prayers reserved for the Prophet, narrated in the books of invocations; we have not copied them here because they are beyond our purpose here. Likewise, there are many prophetic *sunnah*s about prayers, invocations and *awrād*[1], whoever wants to know about them should look in the relevant books.

(151) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Yazīd b. Khalīfah that he said: "I said to Abū ʿAbdillāh, 'Surely ʿUmar b. Ḥanzalah has brought to us from you the time (of prayer).' He said, 'Then he will not tell lie about us.' And I said, 'He said that the time of *maghrib* (prayer) is when the disc (of the sun) disappears; but when the Messenger of God was on a journey, he delayed the *maghrib* and combined *maghrib* with *'ishā'*.' He said, 'He said right.'"

(152) *al-Tahdhīb*: Narrates through his chain from Ṭalḥah b. Zayd from Jaʿfar from his father (peace be upon them) that the Prophet, in rainy nights, used to shorten the *maghrib* and hasten the *'ishā'*, praying both together, and used to say: "He who does not have mercy will not be dealt with mercy."

(153) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, from Ḥammād, from al-Ḥalabī, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said:

1 Short invocations, (pl. of *wird*).

"When the Messenger of God was on a journey, or had an urgent work, he used to combine *ẓuhr* with *'aṣr* and *maghrib* with *'ishā'*, ..." This meaning is narrated by al-Kulaynī, al-Shaykh, Ibn al-Shaykh and the First Martyr, may God have mercy on them.

(154) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: Narrates through his chain from Muʿāwiyah b. Wahb from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The *muadhdhin* used to come to the Prophet during hot season (calling him) for the prayer of *ẓuhr*, so the Messenger of God used to tell him: "*Abrid, abrid*."

Author's comment: al-Ṣadūq interpreted the last two words as, "make haste, make haste," taking it from "*al-barīd*" (post); but apparently it indicates delay, so that intense heat might go away, as points to it what is narrated in the Book of *al-'Ulā'*, from Muḥammad b. Muslim that he said, "Passed from near me Abū Jaʿfar in the mosque of the Messenger of God and I was praying. Then he met me after that and said, 'Take care not to pray *wājib* at that time; do you perform it in the intense heat?' I said, 'I was praying *nāfilah*.'"

(155) *Iḥyāu al-'Ulūm*: He said: "Never sat anyone near him when he was praying, but he shortened his prayer and turned to him and said, 'Do you need something?' Then after accomplishing his work, he returned to his prayer."

(156) *Kitāb Zuhd al-Nabī* (by Jaʿfar b. Aḥmad al-Qummī): He said: "Whenever the Prophet stood up for prayer, his face turned ashen, and there was whizzing sound coming from his chest or belly because of the (Divine) fear."

Author's comment: This meaning has also been narrated by Ibn al-Faḥd and others.

(157) *Ibid*: He said: "And another tradition says that when the Prophet stood in prayer (it looked) as if he was a flung away cloth."

(158) *Biḥār al-Anwār*: He said: "'Āishah said, 'The Messenger of God talked with us and we talked with him, but when the (time of) prayer came then it was as if he did not know us nor we did know him.'"

(159) *al-Majālis* (by Mufīdu al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī): Narrates through his chain to ʿAlī that he wrote to Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, when he made him the governor of Egypt: "... Then look at your *rukū'* and

sujūd, because surely the Messenger of God was most perfect of the people in prayer, and shortest of them in its activities."

(160) *al-Jaʿfariyyāt*: Narrates through his chain from Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad, from his forefathers from ʿAlī that he said: "When the Messenger of God yawned during the prayer, he stopped it with his right hand."

Author's comment: A similar tradition is narrated in *al-Daʿāim*.

(161) *ʿIlalu al-Sharāiʿ*: Narrates through his chain from Hishām b. al-Ḥakam from Abu al-Ḥasan Moses, inter alia, in a *ḥadīth* that he said: "I said to him, 'For what reason it is said in the *rukūʿ*: *Subḥāna rabbiya al-ʿaẓīmī wa bi-ḥamdih*, and it is said in *sajdah*: *Subḥāna rabbiya al-aʿlā wa bi-ḥamdih*?' He said, 'O Hishām! Surely when the Messenger of God was taken up in *miʿrāj*, and he performed prayer, and remembered what he had seen of the grandeur of God, his limbs trembled and he sat down on his knees and he began saying: *Subḥāna rabbiya al-ʿaẓīmī wa bi-ḥamdih*; then when he stood up from the *rukūʿ* and looked at a place still higher, he fell down on his face, saying: *Subḥāna rabbiya al-aʿlā wa bi-ḥamdih*; when he said it seven times, that fear went away; therefore this began as a *sunnah*.'"

(162) *Tanbīhu al-Khawāṭir*: (of al-Shaykh Warrām b. Abī Firās) from al-Nuʿmān that he said: "The Messenger of God used to level our lines, as if he equalizes the arrow-shafts, until he saw that we were heedless of it. Then one day he came out and stood up until he was about to say *takbīr*, and he saw a man whose chest was shown ahead, so he said, 'Servants of God! You should level your lines or your faces will be turned aside.'"

(163) *Ibid*: It is narrated from Ibn Masʿūd that he said: "The Messenger of God used to touch our shoulders in prayer and say, 'Be straight and be not uneven, otherwise your hearts will differ from one another.' ..."

(164) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: Narrates through his chain from Dāwūd b. al-Ḥaṣīn, from Abu al-ʿAbbās, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "The Messenger of God remained in seclusion (*iʿtikāf*) in the first ten days of the month of Ramaḍān, then remained in seclusion in the middle (second) ten days of Ramaḍān, thereafter

he continued to remain in seclusion in the last ten days."

(165) *Ibid*: He said: "Abū ʿAbdillāh said, 'The (battle of) Badr was in the month of Ramaḍān, and the Messenger of God did not remain in seclusion; so when the next year came, he remained in seclusion for twenty days: ten days for that (current) year and ten as repayment of what he had missed (of the last year).'"

Author's comment: al-Kulaynī has narrated this and the preceding tradition in *al-Kāfī*.

(166) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from al-Ḥalabī, from Abū ʿAbdillāh that he said: "When the last ten days came (that is, of the month of Ramaḍān), the Messenger of God used to remain in *iʿtikāf* (seclusion) in the mosque, and a cupola of hair was erected for him, and he tucked up his apron, and his bed was rolled up." (Someone added): "and was detached from the women." (The Imām) said, "As for detachment from the women, No."

Author's comment: This theme is narrated in many traditions; the negation of detachment from the women—as they have explained and what the traditions say—means permission of mixing with and living with them, not cohabitation.

(167) And among his manners and sunnahs regarding fast, is what is narrated in *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, through his chain from Muḥammad b. Marwān that he said: "I heard Abū ʿAbdillāh saying, 'The Messenger of God used to fast until it was said, "He would not break the fast," and used to break the fast until it was said: "He would not fast"; then he fasted one day and broke the fast the next day; then he fasted on Mondays and Thursdays. Then he returned from it to the fast of three days in a month: Thursday at the beginning of the month, Wednesday in the middle of the month, and Thursday at the end of the month; and he used to say: "That is the fast of the life time."

"'And my father used to say: "No one is more hated by God than the man who, when it is said to him that the Messenger of God used to do such and such, says: 'God will not punish me for my striving in prayer and fast'; it is as if he thinks that the Messenger of God had left out some good work being unable to do it."'"

(168) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Muḥammad b. Muslim,

from Abū ʿAbdillāh that the Messenger of God, in the beginning of his prophethood, used to fast (continuously) until it was said: "He will not leave fasting"; and left fasting until it was said: "He will not fast (again)"; then he left this and began fasting one day and breaking the fast the next day (and it is the fast of Prophet David); then he left it and fasted three bright days; then he left it and divided them—one day in every ten days—two Thursdays with a Wednesday in the middle, and he expired and he followed the same.

Author's comment: There are numerous nearly *mutawātir* traditions of this theme.

(169) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from ʿAnbasah al-ʿĀbid that he said: "The Prophet kept up fast on Shaʿbān, Ramaḍān and of three days in every month.

(170) *al-Nawādir* (of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā): Narrates from ʿAlī b. Nuʿmān, from Zarʿah, from Sumāʿah, that he said: "I asked Abū ʿAbdillāh about the fast of Shaʿbān, whether the Messenger of God did fast it. He said, 'Yes, and he did not fast its whole month.' I said, 'How many days he broke the fast?' He said, 'He broke it.' So I repeated (the question) and he repeated it three times, without adding to the word, 'he broke it'. The next year I asked him the same question, and he replied to me in the same way "

(171) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: It is narrated from Anas that he said: "The Messenger of God had a drink with which he broke the fast, and another drink for the *suḥūr*;[1] and often both were the same, and often it was milk, and sometime the drink was a bread liquefied "

(172) *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Ibn al-Qaddāḥ, from Abū ʿAbdillāh, that he said: "The first thing with which the Messenger of God broke his fast in the season of fresh ripe dates with those fresh dates, and in the season of dried dates with dried dates."

(173) *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from al-Sakūnī, from Jaʿfar, from his father (peace be upon both), that he said: "When the Messenger of God fasted and did not get anything sweet, he broke

1 *Suḥūr*: The last meal before dawn (in fasting). (Trans.)

his fast with water; and it is written in some traditions that sometimes he broke his fast with dried grapes."

(174) *al-Muqniʿah*: It is narrated from the progeny of Muḥammad that they said: "It is *mustaḥab* to take something before the dawn, even a sip of water. And it is narrated that the best of it is date and a mush made of wheat or barley, because the Messenger of God used to take it."

Author's comment: And it is among his continued *sunnahs*. One of the things reserved to him was the fast of *wiṣāl*, that is, fasting continuously for more than one day without any intervening *ifṭār*. And he expressly prohibited it to his *ummah* and said: "Surely you are not strong enough to do it and surely for me there is near my Lord what feeds me and gives drink to me."

(175) *Makārim al-Akhlāq*: It is narrated about the Prophet that he used to eat *harīsah* most of the times and used it for *suḥūr* too.

(176) *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*: He said: "When the month of Ramaḍān came, the Messenger of God freed every prisoner, and gave to every beggar."

(177) *Daʿāimu al-Islām*: ʿAlī said, "The Messenger of God used to roll up his bed and became very active during the last ten days of Ramaḍān; and he used to keep his family awake in the twenty-third night, and sprinkled water on the faces of the sleepy ones in the night; and Fāṭimah (peace be upon her) did not let anyone to sleep from her family in that night, and prepared them for it by reducing their meal during the day; and she used to say: 'Deprived is he who is deprived of its (that is, this night's) good.'"

(178) *al-Muqniʿ* : It is *sunnah* that the man should break his fast in *al-Aḍḥā* after the (*ʿīd*) prayer, and in *al-Fiṭr* before the prayer.

(179) And among his manners regarding recitation of the Qur'an and invocation are what is narrated in *al-Majālis* (of al-Shaykh) through his chain from Abu al-Dunyā, from the Leader of the Faithful that he said, "Nothing prevented the Messenger of God from recitation of the Qur'an except *janābah* (major ritual impurity)."

(180) *Majmaʿu al-bayān*: It is narrated from Umm Salamah that the Prophet used to disconnect his recitation verse to verse.

(181) *Tafsīr* (of Abu al-Futūḥ): "He used not to sleep until he recited *al-musabbiḥāt*, and he used to say: 'There is, in these chapters, a verse that is better than a thousand verses.' They said, 'And what is *al-musabbiḥāt*?' He said, 'Chapters of "Iron," "The Mustering," "The Ranks," "Congregation" and "Mutual Fraud"'".

Author's comment: This meaning has been narrated in *Majmaʿu al-bayān*, from al-'Irbāṣ b. Sāriyah.

(182) *Durar al-La'ālī* (of Ibn Abī Jamhūr): Narrates from Jābir that he said: "The Prophet used not to sleep until he recited *Tabāraka* and *Alif-Lām-Mmīm al-Tanzīl*."[1]

(183) *Majmaʿu al-bayān*: "'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib has narrated that the Messenger of God loved this chapter: *Sabbiḥ isma rabbika al-Aʿlā*[2]; and the first to say: *Subḥāna Rabbiya al-Aʿlā*, was Mīkā'īl."

Author's comment: The first part of this *ḥadīth* is narrated in *Biḥār al-anwār* from *al-Durr al-manthūr*. There are other traditions about what he used to say at the time of reciting the Qur'an, or reciting (various) chapters, or especial verses. Whoever wants to know it should refer to the relevant books.

There are lectures and statements issued by him in which he awakens the awareness of, and prompts, the people to hold fast to the Qur'an and meditate on it, to be led by its guidance and be illuminated by its light. And he had more right than anyone else to reach, for the perfection he called the people to, and the first and quickest to reach to every good; and, according to the well known narration, he had said: "Turned my hair white the chapter of 'Hūd'."[3] And it has been narrated[4] from Ibn Masʿūd that he said: "Ordered me the Messenger of God that I should recite for him some parts of the Qur'an; so I recited for him the chapter of Jonah; until when I reached the divine words: *and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true Master* (10:30), I saw him and he was trembling with tear in his noble eyes."

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1 ch.67 and 32. (Trans.)

2 ch.87 (Trans.)

3 He points to the Divine Words in it: *Continue then in the right way as you are commanded, ...* (11:112) (Auth.)

4 The tradition is narrated by its meaning. (Auth.)

These are some small bits[1] from his manners and *sunnahs*; there are nearly *mutawātir* traditions, which have been repeatedly narrated in a lot of books of both sects, and Divine Speech supports it and does not refute any of it; and God is the Guide.

Slavery And Enslavement:

The Divine Words: *If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy slaves* (5:118) explain the meaning of slavery and servitude. Although there are many verses in the Qur'an that have this theme, but this verse contains the rational argumentation which shows that if there were a slave it would conform with reason that his master had the right to punish him as he wished, because he was his master and owner.

The reason does not accept the permission of giving punishment, and does not allow the management that would be very hard, except after establishing that the master is allowed to have all managerial disposals. So, the master has the right to deal with his slave anyhow he wishes and with whatever he wishes; the reason has made exception of only those disposals which it disapproves because they are disgusting and ignoble, not because the slave is slave.

As its concomitant, the slave is bound to obey his master in all that he is told to do, and to follow him in his wishes. He has no authority to engage in any activity if his master does not approve of it. It is somehow pointed at by the Divine Words: *Nay! They are honored servants; they do not precede Him in speech and* (only) *according to His command do they act* (21:26–27). See also the verse: *Allah sets forth a parable*—(consider) *a slave, the property of another,* (who) *has no power over anything, and one whom We have granted from Ourselves a goodly sustenance so he spends from it secretly and openly; are the two alike?* (16:75).

A full discussion of various aspects of what the noble Qur'an sees on the question of servitude and slavery depends on the following chapters:

1. Consideration of Servitude to God

There are numerous verses in the noble Qur'an which count the people slaves of God, and builds on it the root of the religious call: The people are slaves

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1 We have taken it from a booklet that we had written earlier on the *sunnah* of the Prophet (may God's blessings be upon him and his progeny). (Auth.)

and God is their true Master. Rather it crosses this limit and takes all those who are in the heavens and the earth stamped with the brand of servitude; like the reality which is called angel in their multitude, and another reality which the Qur'an has named jinn. The Sublime, to Whom belong Might and Majesty says: *There is no one in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Beneficent God as a slave* (20:93).

There is no doubt that the consideration of the servitude to God is an aspect arrived at through analysis. First, we analyze the meaning of servitude to its basic components, then we decide that its reality is established after removal of its extra characteristics, which attach themselves to the basic meaning in the rational creatures. There are some people one of whom is called slave. Why? Because his person is owned by another, an ownership which allows that another person (who is his owner and master) to manage him in any way he wishes and with whatever he desires, and removes from the slave the independence of will altogether.

Meditation in this meaning leads one to decide that a human being and if you wish, you may extend it and say, everyone who has cognizance and will—is slave of God in the true meaning of servitude. The fact is that God is the Owner of all that is called "thing" in the real meaning of ownership. Nothing owns—neither by itself nor through something else—any harm or benefit, nor death, life or resurrection; and nothing becomes independent in existence by its person, attribute or action except what God has made it its owner—an ownership which does not negate God's ownership, nor does it transfer the ownership from Him to someone else; rather He is the Owner of what He has made them the owner of, and has power over what He has given them the power on, and He has power over everything, and He encompasses everything.

This real authority and actual ownership is what makes it obligatory to them to obey what God wants from them by His legislative will, and the religious laws and regulations which He lays down, through which their affairs are mended and their bliss and happiness in both worlds is achieved.

In short, God, the Sublime, is their owner in the creative ownership, which makes them His slaves, submissive to His decree, no matter whether they knew Him or not, obeyed His commands or disobeyed. He is, also, their owner in the legislative ownership, which obligates them to listen and obey, and commands them to observe piety and worship.

This ownership and mastership in its effect is distinguished from the

ownership and mastership which is prevalent among the people—and likewise its opposite, the servitude—as follows: As God is the creative Owner unrestrictedly, and there is no owner other than Him, it is not permissible, in the stage of legislative servitude, to take any other master, nor to worship any other. God says: *And your Lord has commanded that you shall not worship* (any) *but Him* (17:23). It is contrary to the mastership prevalent among the people, because here he who overcomes others through any means of domination enjoys ownership.

Also, as among His slaves who are owned by Him, there is nothing which is not owned by Him, and they are not divided in their existence between owned and not owned, and as they are in their persons and attributes as well as in their conditions and deeds, creatively owned by Him, which is followed by legislative ownership. So, this ownership decrees that the servitude will be everlasting and will cover all that returns to them in any way. They have no latitude to worship God partially, for example, that they worship Him with tongue, but not with hand. Also, they are not allowed to reserve some parts of their worship to God and the other parts to someone else. It is contrary to the mastership prevalent among the people, in which the master has no rational authority to do whatever he wishes. Ponder on it.

It is this theme which leads to the unrestrictedness of the like of Divine Words: ... *you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessor;* (32:4). *And He is Allah, there is no god but He! All praise is due to Him in this* (life) *and the hereafter, and His is the judgement,* ...(28:70); *Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth declares the glory of Allah; to Him belongs the kingdom, and to Him is due* (all) *praise, and He has power over all things* (64:1).

In any case, the servitude considered in regards to God is an analytical meaning inferred from the servitude, which rational people see in their societies, so it has a basis in human society. Now, Let us see what is its basis:

2. Enslaving Human Beings and Its Causes

Enslavement and holding people in bondage was prevalent in human society up to about seventy years before today.[1] And probably it is still found in some primitive tribes in Asia and Africa. Keeping slave-boys and

1 That is, at the time of this writing, probably in 1960's. (Trans.)

slave-maids was an established system among ancient nations for which no historical beginning can be fixed. It had its special system and rules and regulations, which were commonly followed, in all nations, and some special rules were found in different nations.

Its basic meaning: A human individual, in presence of some special conditions, becomes merchandise, owned like other owned items of trade, example, animals, vegetables, and stones, etc. When the person is owned, he is deprived of all options; someone else owns his actions and his effects that manages them as he wishes.

This was their custom concerning enslavement. However it was not based on an at random will, nor was it unrestricted or not based on any condition. It was not possible for someone to enslave whomsoever one wished, nor could he own whomsoever he wished through trade or gift and so on. In short, the basic meaning was not based on any recklessness or foolhardiness, although contained within the laws related to it there could have been numerous foolish items, according to varying opinions and customs of the nations.

Enslavement was based on a sort of victory and domination, for example, victory in war, which gives the victor power to do with his vanquished enemy whatever he wishes example, killing, imprisoning and so on; and the domination of presidency which makes a tyrant president do whatever he wants in his jurisdiction; and the mutual relationship of procreation and breeding which puts the mastership of the affairs of a weakling infant in the hands of his strong father who could do with him whatever he thought fit, even selling him, gifting him, exchanging him or lending him and so on.

We have repeatedly mentioned earlier that the ownership in the human society is based on the power ingrained in human nature to utilize and take benefit from everything it is possible to utilize in any way. And man, by nature, employs other things; he employs, for continuing his life, everything he has in power, and gets benefit from his existence's beneficial things, beginning from his basic matter, then elements, then various components of solid matters, then animal kingdom until another human being who is his like in humanity.

However, as he found that he is in dire need of society and social cooperation, he felt himself obliged to accept partnership with all individuals of his species in utilization of the benefits, which are obtained from the

things through their joint activities. In this way, he and all individuals of the human species together will form a society, in which every part will be reserved for one or more deeds, and the whole society will benefit from the whole benefits. You may say it in other words that the results of those activities will be divided among them, and every one of them will enjoy those benefits according to his status in social order. That is why we see that as much as a social individual gets strength and power, he negates natural sociology and begins employing people, dominating and enslaving them, and decides about their persons, honor and properties in whatever way he wishes.

Consequently, if you ponder freely on their system of enslaving people, you will find that they do not consider owning a man if he is a member of their society; rather an owned man is considered outside of society, like a fighting enemy whose only aim is to destroy the tilth and offspring; and man erases his name and trace as he is out of his enemy's society, and he has a right to destroy him through annihilation and to enslave him as he wishes, because there is no sanctity attached to him; or like a father *vis-à-vis* his minor children and his other dependents as he believes that being his dependents in the society they cannot be his equal, of the same status or similar, and he has the right to do whatever he likes with them, not excluding killing or selling, etc.

Possibly, the owner has some special characteristics because of which he believes that he is above the society, he is above the others in importance, and he does not share with them a benefit; rather he has the final say and definite decision; and has the right to enjoy the best of what he chooses, and to manage their persons even through ownership and enslavement.

It is now clear that the basic root on which man has built the custom of enslavement is the right of special domain and unconditional ownership which man believes he has, and that he does not exclude from it anyone except his partners in human society, those who are equal to him in social weight, and with whom he secures himself in the citadel of cooperation and mutual help. As for others, he does not see any hindrance in owning or enslaving them.

The main candidates for this enslavement are three groups: (i) A fighting enemy, (ii) weak children and women *vis-à-vis* their fathers and guardians, respectively, (iii) a vanquished demeaned person *vis-à-vis* the victor

and dominant person.

3. Origin of Enslavement in History

Although it is not known when the system of slavery began in the society, yet most probably slaves were taken in the beginning as a result of war and domination, and then their children and women were included in it. That is why we find in the history of strong warrior nations stories and tales as well as the laws and regulations related to enslavement through imprisonment, and which is not found in other nations.

Slavery was prevalent in ancient civilized nations, like India, Greece, Rome and Iran, and among religious communities like the Jews and the Christians, as is seen in the Torah and the Injīl. This was the case until the advent of Islam. Islam affirmed the basic idea but restricted its circle and ameliorated its laws; finally came the Brussels Convention some seventy years ago[1], which resolved to abolish the slavery.

Ferdinand Total says in his Dictionary of Eminent Persons of East and West:

Slavery was widespread among the ancients and slave was taken from war prisoners and captives and from defeated tribes. Slavery had a system well known among the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans and the Arabs in the days of ignorance and in Islam.

The system of slavery was abolished gradually: In India (1843), in French colonies (1848), in the U.S.A. after the Civil War (1865), and in Brazil (1888) until the Brussels Convention resolved to abolish enslavement; but it is still found in some tribes in Africa and Asia.

The basis of the abolition of slavery is equality of human beings in rights and responsibilities.

4. Islamic View About It

Islam divided the slavery according to its causes: It has been explained earlier that its main causes were three: War, domination and guardianship like parentage, etc; and it abolished two of them altogether, that is, domination and guardianship.

According to Islam all people are equally honorable, be they king or

1 In 1890. (Trans.)

subject, ruler or ruled, commander or soldier, master or servant; it abolished all distinctions and life characteristics, and established equality amongst individuals in the respect which it accorded to their persons, honor and properties; and gave weight to their perceptions and wills—and it means full authority within the circle of respected rights—and to their actions and what they acquired, and it is their authority and control on their properties and benefit of their existence in activities. A master of affairs in Islam has authority over the people only in implementation of penal code and other laws and regarding the general welfare, which returns to the religious society. But as to what his heart desires and what he likes for his individual life, he is just like any other person, he has no special privilege among them, and his order is not implemented in what he desires, be it great or small. This abolishes the slavery based on domination, as a negative with absence of the subject.

It also regulated the guardianship of fathers over their sons; they do have the rights of nursing and protection, and they are duty bound to bringing them up and educating them, and looking after their properties as long as they are prevented from managing it because of their minority; and when they reach the age of maturity, then they are equal to their fathers in social religious rights; they are independent in their lives, and they have the option for what they do like for their own selves.

Of course, it has emphasized the enjoinment of doing good to their parents and consideration of the rights of upbringing. God says: *And We have enjoined man in respect of his parents—his mother bears him with fainting upon fainting and his weaning takes two years—saying: "Be grateful to Me and to both your parents; to Me is the eventual coming. And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them, and keep company with them in this world kindly, and follow the way of him who turns to Me,"* (31:14–15); *And your Lord has commanded that you shall not worship* (*any*) *but Him, and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them "Ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: "O my Lord! Have mercy on them, as they brought me up* (*when I was*) *little."* (17:23–24).

And the Islamic *sharīʿah* has counted disobedience of parents among major sins that lead to perdition.

As for the women, it gave them a position in society and accorded them a social weight from which the healthy reason cannot deviate a single step. In this way they became one half of the human society while hitherto they were deprived of it; they were given independent authority in matters of matrimony and property when until now they had no such power, or were not independent.

They participated with men in many affairs, while some affairs were exclusively reserved to them and some others were reserved to men. All this was decided considering their being's sustenance and their physiological composition; then she was given latitude in some matters while men were put under hard pressure, like providing sustenance of the family, participating in battlefields, and so on.

We have talked on this subject in detail at the end of the chapter of "The Cow" in the second volume[1] of the book and in the beginning of the chapter of "Women" in the fourth volume[2]; and it was made clear there that the women enjoy in Islam more leniency *vis-à-vis* the men which cannot be found in any sociological system, ancient or modern.

God says: *... for men is the benefit of what they earn and for women is the benefit of what they earn; ...* (4:32); *... there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a proper manner; ...* (2:234); *... and they have rights similar to those against them in a just manner; ...* (2:228); "*That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other; ...*" (3:195). Then He has declared for the whole species joined together: *... for it is* (the benefit of) *what it has earned, and upon it is* (the evil of) *what it has wrought; ...* (2:286); *... and no soul earns* (evil) *but against itself, and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another; ...* (6:165). Of the same import are many other unrestricted verses which treat an individual man a complete and perfect part of the society and gives him an independence with which he becomes separate from any other person in the result of his actions, be it good or evil, beneficial or harmful, without making exception of big or small, male or female.

Then He equalized them all in honor and dignity, and then He abolished all honor and dignity except the religious dignity, which is acquired

1 *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.4. (Trans.)

2 *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.7. (Trans.)

by piety and deeds. God says: *... and to Allah belongs the honor and to His Messenger and to the believers, ...* (63:8); *O you people! Surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and clans that you may recognize each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most pious;* (49:13).

However, Islam affirmed the third cause of enslavement, that is, war. It means that an unbeliever who fights God, His Messenger, and the believers will be arrested and enslaved. But in case the believers fight amongst themselves there is no imprisonment nor enslaving; rather that party which has crossed the limit will be fought against until it submits to the rule of God. God says: *And if two parties of the believers fight, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; surely Allah loves those who act equitably. The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and* (49:9–10).

It is because a fighting enemy whose only aim is to annihilate humanity and destroy tilth and offspring, the human nature does not entertain least doubt that he should not be treated as a part of the human society who should be allowed to enjoy the fruits of life and the societal rights; and that it is incumbent to remove him even by annihilation, if necessary. On this runs the system of human beings since they came on this earth until this day, and it will continue in the same manner.

Islam has laid the foundation of the society—the religious society—on the basis of monotheism and the government of Islamic religion; it has kept away a man who spurns monotheism and religious government, from being a part of human society, except as a *dhimmi* or under agreement. He who is outside the religion and its government or agreement is outside the human society. Islam deals with him as a non-human, whom a human being may deprive from any blessing which man enjoys in his life; it pushes him to the fringe, thus cleansing the earth from the impurity of his arrogance and corruption. In short, he is deprived of any respect in his person, his action and the results of any of his endeavours; therefore, the Islamic army may arrest him and enslave him when he is vanquished.

5. What is the Way of Enslaving in Islam?

The Muslims prepare to deal with neighboring unbelievers. They complete the proof against them and invite them to the word of truth with wisdom, admonition and argumentation in a beautiful manner. If the unbelievers respond to it positively, then they become brethren in religion, sharing in all what is for or against the Muslims. But if they reject it, and they are from the People of the Book, and accept to pay *jizyah*, then they are left alone to enjoy their *dhimmah*. Or, if they entered into agreement, no matter they were the People of the Book or not, their agreement would be honored and fulfilled. But if there was nothing of the above, then they are given ultimatum and fought.

In such encounter, whoever among them raises a sword and enters the battle, will be killed; but will not be killed from them the weakened men, women and children; they will not be attacked at night or ambushed; water will not be cut off from them, they will not be tortured nor their organs cut off; they shall be fought against until there is no *fitnah* and religion becomes of God; then if they desisted then there is no hostility except against the unjust.

When the Muslims vanquished them and the fighting came to its end, then whatever the Muslims brought under their control—be it their persons or properties—will become their property. The history of the wars of the Messenger of God and his expeditions contains bright shining pages, that is full of his comportment brimming over with beautiful justice, full of chivalry and generosity, magnanimity and kindness.

6. What is the Islamic Perspective Concerning Slave-Men and Women?

When one gets enslaved, he becomes his master's property; benefits of his work are for another person (that is, his master) and his expenses are on his master.

Islam has enjoined that the master should treat his slave as he treats his family members, and he is one of the family (members); he/ she equally shares with them in requirements of life and its needs. The Messenger of God used to eat with his slaves and servants and sit with them; he did not give preference to himself over them in food, cloth, etc.

Islam also laid down that the slaves should not be burdened with hard labor; they should not be tortured, abused or oppressed. They were allowed

to marry among themselves with permission of their masters, also free men could marry slave girls; they could give evidence like free people and could be their partners in work during slavery and after that.

Islam showed so much compassion towards them that they participated with free men in all public affairs. We find many slaves who were given governorship and military command, etc., as the history of the early days of Islam shows; among the very respected companions of the Prophet, there were some slaves or freed slaves, like Salmān, Bilāl and others.

The Messenger of God emancipated his slave-girl Ṣafiyyah, daughter of Ḥuyayy b. Akhṭab and married her; and he married Juwayriyyah daughter of Ḥārith after the battle of Banu al-Muṣṭaliq, and she was among the captives, and they were two hundred houses with their women and children, and this marriage became the cause of the emancipation of all the captives; and this story, in short, was written in the fourth volume of this book.[1]

It is evident from the behavior of Islam that it gives precedence to a pious slave over a dissolute free man; and it allows a slave to own property and enjoy general privileges of life with permission of his master. This is in short what Islam has done for them.

Then it puts utmost emphasis on recommendation to emancipate them, and called in attractive way to remove them from the environment of slavery to the open field of freedom; and in this way their number was continuously decreasing and their group was turning free for the sake of God. Not only that: It made emancipation of slave a part of atonements, like atonement of murder, atonement of missing a fast, etc. Then it allowed them to make condition with their masters, or enter into agreement of *kitābah*[2] and *tadbīr*[3] All this meticulousness of giving them freedom and joining them with healthy human society, in a definite way, was rendered with the aim of removing from them all manners of humiliation.

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1 See Eng. transl., vol.7.

2 *Kitābah*: An agreement between a slave and his master that the slave will become free after payment of a stipulated amount. (Trans.)

3 *Tadbīr*: When a master declares that his slave will become free after the master's death. (Trans.)

7. Gist of the Above Discussions

The above discussion leads us to three results.

First: Islam spared no effort to abolish the causes of enslavement, to reduce the number of and to weaken, those causes, until it stopped at the one cause which was inevitable by nature's decision, that is, allowing the enslavement of every person who fights against the religion, who opposes the human society and does not submit to the truth in any possible way.

Second: Islam used all possible means to accord respect to slaves—male and female—and in bringing their life affairs nearer to the life of the members of the free society, until they became like one of them—even if not one of them; and there did not remain on them except a thin curtain, that is, whatever they earn in excess of what is needed for their necessities of an average life, belongs to their masters, not to them. You may also say: There is no difference between a free man and a slave in Islam except permission of the master about the slave.

Third: Islam used every effective device to join the group of slaves to the society of free men: in some cases by exhortations, and in others by compulsion, like atonements, and through permission and enforcement, like *tadbīr* and *kitābah*.

8. Progress of Enslavement in History

Scholars have said[1] that enslavement appeared, when it appeared, through capture and imprisonment. Before that, when tribes overcame in their wars and battles and captured some enemies, they killed all of them. Then they thought that it was better to leave them alive and keep them under their ownership like other war booties. It was done not for benefitting from their work, but as a good deed towards them, and for preservation of mankind and for respect of moral laws which gradually had appeared among them on the path of civilization.

This system appeared among the tribes only after they had left getting their sustenance through hunting; because up to that point they did not enjoy enough affluence which could allow them to spend on slave boys

1 It has been taken from: 1. Encyclopaedea of Religion and Ethics, by John Hisinik (?) British ed., 2. Short History, by H.G. Wells, British ed., 3. Spirit of the Laws, by Monisque, Tehran ed. (Auth.)

and girls; until they changed to the life of settlement and emigration, and then they could do so.

With the spread of slavery among tribes and nations—by whichever way it was—man's social life was transformed, as first some system and discipline appeared in the societies, and second, there appeared division of labor.

Slavery, when it was prevalent in the world, was not of one manner throughout; it was not found in some regions altogether, like Australia, Central Asia, Siberia, North America, Skimos and some regions in Africa in north of Nile and south of Rambis.

Conversely, it was wide spread in Arabia, primitive Africa, Europe and South America. Also, it was prevalent among the Jews; the Torah calls the slaves to obey the masters; and the same was the case with Christianity; St. Paul in his epistle to Philemon writes that Onesimus was a defector slave whom Paul caused to return to his master, Philemon.

The Jews were most gentle with their slaves; its evidence may be seen in the fact that we have not found any towering building built by them, unlike the pyramids of Egypt and historical Assyrian buildings, which were built by back breaking labor of slaves; the Romans and the Greeks were the harshest nations to slaves.

The idea of emancipation of slaves spread in the Eastern Rome after Constantine, until slavery was abolished there in the 13th century C.E.; but it continued in Eastern Rome in another form, that is, they sold and bought farms together with the farm workers—Farming was among slaves' activity—but forced labor was abolished among them.

Slavery was widely prevalent in most of the European countries up to 1772 C.E. Shortly before that an agreement was made between England and Spain that the English would fetch to them every year four thousand eight hundred African slaves up to thirty years in exchange of a huge amount that they would pay.

Public opinion was raised among them against slavery and enslavement in 1761 C.E. The earliest group, which rose against it, was the religious sect, the Quakers. This continued until a law was passed that whoever entered the British isle would become free.

However, it appeared after deep investigation in 1788 C.E. that England dealt every year in two hundred thousand slaves; and those slaves who were taken from Africa to America alone were one hundred thousand.

This continued until keeping of slaves was abolished in Britain in 1833; and the government paid slave-trading companies twenty million pounds as price of the slave boys and girls who were thus emancipated. At this time 770,380 persons became free.

Slavery was abolished in America in 1862, after tough struggles by American people. The northern and the southern states of the U.S.A. had different views on slavery. The northern states kept slave boys and girls for 'adornment', for status purpose only; not so the southern states—their main occupation was farming and agriculture, and they were in dire need of a great number of working hands; they kept the slaves for getting the benefits of their labor. That was the reason they felt restrained from accepting the general emancipation.

Slavery continued to be abolished in one kingdom after the other until the Brussels Convention of 1890 C.E. decided to abolish it completely, and the governments enforced it and it was abolished in the whole world, and in this manner millions of people were emancipated. (End of their statement, abridged)

If you look minutely you will see that this long struggle and this argumentation, then the laws of emancipation that were laid down and enforced, all of this was related to the slavery through guardianship or domination, as may be witnessed from the fact that most or all of the slaves were brought from around Africa where such slavery was practised. As for the enslavement through captivity in war (which Islam had confirmed), it was never discussed about.

9. A Glance on Their Structure

This natural independence, which we call God gifted independence of man, (and we do not know what is the reason of depriving all other animal species of this freedom while they too are similar to man in psychological cognizance and motivating will; except that we say that it is man himself who snatches it away in order to benefit from them), does not branch out from any root except on this: that man is equipped with inner cognizance which differentiates between what he enjoys and what gives it pain, and then with a will which incites it to pull towards him what gives him enjoyment and to push away what gives it pain; thus he has the ability to choose for himself what he pleases.

Human cognizance is not restricted—that it attaches to one thing and does not attach with another in that a weak and humble man does not know what a strong and powerful man does; nor is the human will limited with a circle which prevents it from attaching to some of what it likes, or compels it to be attached with what someone else's will is attached, in order to proceed in a way that some other person benefits from it and he forgets himself. A weak and vanquished man wants for himself things similar to all that strong and victorious man wants; and there is no physical connection between the will of a weak and that of a strong person which could compel the will of the weak not to be attached with what the will of the strong one is attached; or which might make the will of the weak dissolve in that of the strong man, so that the two together would become one will acting for the benefit of the strong one; or the weak's will would follow the strong's will in a way that it loses its freedom.

In such a case, as is necessary for the laws of life to be based on the foundation of physical body, it was incumbent for man to live independent in his person and in his deeds; and from this breast has suckled the abolition of slavery.

But we should think over this God gifted freedom to man: Whether it is prevalent in the human society in general since it began and remained in human body.

Human species—according to our knowledge—since its beginning lives in sociological condition; and it cannot do otherwise, according to its system of being, and it is impossible for a society to continue as a society even for a short period without a common system shared by all its members, no matter whether it is a national and just system, or is based on tyranny, fool-hardiness or whatsoever; this system, whatever it is, limits the individual's freedom.

Moreover, man cannot live without some interference in the matter that ensures his continuity. This is not possible except if he attaches to himself the thing in which he interferes—the attachment which we call ownership—which is more general than the terminology of right and ownership—whatever this man wears, that one cannot wear it; whatever this individual eats, buys or engages in, another individual cannot hold it under his control. It is nothing but putting a limit to the non-interfering person in generality of his will, a restriction to his freedom.

The humanity has always been subject to discord and dispute since it has come on the earth. Not a single day passes over these persons who are spread over the earth, except that the sun rises over them with their discords and sets over them with their disputes. These controversies push them to the loss of lives, despoiling of honor and plundering of properties. Had the man believed in unrestricted freedom for himself—that is, for humanity—there would not have been any trace of these discords.

Also, the system of censure and punishment was always prevalent in various types of societies, civilized or barbaric. What is the implication of this censure? It only means that the society takes away from the guilty person some blessings, which the creation had given him, and deprives him of some of the freedom. Now, if the society or the one who has some authority in society did not own the life of a guilty person who is punished for murder, it could not take it away from him; and if a sinner, indicted for his sin and punished for it by various kinds of chastisement and offence, like amputation, stroke and imprisonment, etc., did not know that the society owned the judgement and its implementation, which affects his life affairs and deprives him of ease and comfort, and takes away his financial authority, he would not have submitted to it. How can a tyrant transgressor be admonished not to indulge in tyranny and transgression; how can he be prevented from aggression against a person or his honor or property without depriving him of some of his freedom?

In short, what no reasonable man can have a doubt about is the fact that if the human freedom unrestrictedly remains in human society, even for a single moment, it would create disturbance in the social system at that moment. So, this get together, which also is natural for man and without which it cannot live, puts restriction on the natural freedom which is gifted to man by his natural will and cognizance. Thus, no human society can live except with some restriction to its freedom, in the same way as it cannot live with negation of freedom altogether. And the human society has always been preserving between these two boundaries this freedom which the western propaganda makes us think that it is they who have laid down its name after they had invented its meaning, and have protected it without restriction.

So, it is this natural sociology, which restricts that natural freedom, and demarcates it as all physical and non-physical powers demarcate one

another. Thus, a power stops from working in consideration of some other power with which it works; like the sight, which is the basis of seeing power, goes on doing its work until the eye becomes tired, or the thinking faculty becomes wearied, and then the sight stops its work in consideration of its colleague's work; likewise the perception of taste enjoys devouring tasty meal and chewing it and swallowing it, until the jaws' muscles become tired and restrain the power of taste, thus it stops from its desired food.

So, the natural sociological demands are not completed for man except when he abandons some of his freedom in action and forgoes his enjoyment.

10. What is the Amount of Limitation?

As for the amount by which this freedom, gifted by the natural get together, is limited, and by which its natural releasing is restricted, it differs with difference of human societies looking at the multitude of the laws which are prevalent in the society, and their smallness because, the restricter of freedom, after the basic get together, is the law which prevails among the people; the more the laws increase and looked minutely at their actions, the more deprivation from freedom will take place; and vice versa.

But what no sociological get together can avoid in whatever society we look at, and what is incumbent, which no social man can ignore it, is the preservation of the society's existence, because man cannot live without it, and protection of the systems, that are found therein, from any defect and breakdown. That is why you will not find any human society but there is in it a defence system which averts dangers from people and their offspring, and protects them from annihilation; and there is a guardian and overseer, who oversees their affairs, and protects from breakdown the prevalent customs and the established precedents which are respected among them, by spreading the social peace and punishing the tyrant aggressor. And the history, as we know, supports it.

This being the case, the first right laid down for the society in the natural *sharīʿah* is that it should take away the freedom from the enemy of the society in the basic get together. You may say in other words: That the society should own the person and action of its enemy, who intends to annihilate its life and destroy his tilth and offspring, and do away with the freedom of his will in any way he wishes—right through killing downwards,

deprive the enemy of custom and law of freedom of action, and own from him what he loses through retribution of person or property, etc.

How can a man—even an individual—believe in the freedom of an enemy who does not respect his society, (so that he might treat him as a brother and join and mingle with him) nor does he desist from destruction of his society (so that he might leave him alone)? How can the natural consideration of society be joined with leaving this enemy free to do whatever he likes? Is it anything but clearly joining two mutually contradictory things? It is only idiocy or insanity.

The above discourse clearly shows that:

First: To base one's ideal on generalization of human freedom is contrary to the clear natural truth laid down for man, which is among the first natural rights that are laid down.

Second: The right of enslavement recognized by Islam fully conforms to natural *sharīʿah*: That the enemies of the true religion who fight the Islamic society should be enslaved. They should be deprived of the freedom of action and be taken inside the religious society and made to live as slaves, so that they should be trained with good training, and proceed gradually to emancipation; in this way they will join the free society with safety and benefit. Also, the master of the affairs has the option to purchase them and emancipate them altogether if he sees in it the good of the religious society, or to use in this respect some other way which does not lead to abrogation of divine commands.

11. The End Result of the Abolition

The big powers enforced the Brussels Convention, strictly banned slave trade, and the slave girls and boys were emancipated. Now, they are not lined up in slave-traders' shops, nor are they pulled ahead like sheep and goats; consequently keeping of eunuchs too was abolished. Today it is impossible to find slaves or eunuchs—even in small number, except what sometimes is reported about primitive nations.

However, will this much—that is, removal of the name of enslavement from tongues, and absence of those called slaves from our sights—convince a critical scholar on this topic? Will not he ask whether it is a verbal problem in which it is enough to ban the use of the name and to call the slave a free man, even if he is deprived of the benefits of his work, and is bound

to follow his master's will. Or, if the problem is related to its meaning, in which consideration is to be given to its meaning according to its reality and external effects.

Now, look at the Second World War, has not passed more than a few decades since its end; the victor nations imposed on the defeated enemy unconditional surrender, then they settled in their countries, took millions of their property and ruled over them and their children; not only that, they transferred millions of their captives to their (victors') country and they used them in whatever work they wished and in any way they desired. And the situation continues until now.

Would that I knew does enslavement mean something, which is not found here, even if its name is not used in it? Does enslavement mean anything except deprivation of freedom, control of (the slave's) will and work, and enforcement by the powerful dominating party of its command on the weak and humiliated party in whatever way it wished, be it justice or injustice?

By God, is it not astonishing that the Islam's judgement in the best possible way is called enslavement, and their order is not called so, while Islam uses the easiest and lightest aspect and they use the hardest and harshest one? We have experienced their love and friendship when they entered our country under the banner of love, help and protection. What would be the condition of those whom they dominated over by enmity and chicanery?

It is now clear that the Convention of abolition (of slavery) was nothing but a political ploy. In reality it took what it rejected.

As for enslavement as a result of war and fighting, Islam enforced it and they too enforced it in practice, although they avoided uttering its name. As for enslavement based on sale by fathers of their sons, which they banned, Islam banned it long ago. And enslavement through domination and command, Islam had banned it too 1400 years before; but these people unanimously banned it, yet we have to see whether this ban too stopped at the words like other aspects or really reached to its meaning and was supported in practice?

You may find answer to this question by looking at the history of European colonialism in Asia, Africa and America. Look at the calamities they brought there, the blood they shed, the honor they despoiled, the properties they plundered, and arbitrary decisions they took and not

by one, one hundred and one thousand.

You do not have to go far for this observation—if it be far—it is enough to think over the reports of what the people of Algeria are suffering since many years at the hand of France, how the lives are destroyed, towns wrecked and people overburdened under pressure. Also, see what the Arab countries had to bear from the English, and what the blacks and Red Indians are suffering in America. Again look at Eastern Europe *vis-à-vis* the Socialist Republics. What we are suffering at the hands of these and those; all this in its words is sincerity and compassion, but in its meaning is enslavement.

It is clear from the above that when they came to the stage of practice, they took what Islam has legislated, that is, abolition of freedom when its natural cause is found, and that is war and fighting with the one who wants demolition of society and annihilation of humanity. It is a lawful decision based on a factual basis, which never changes. That basis is that humanity for its continuation needs removal of what opposes it in existence and continuity. Then comes another reasonable sociological basis which does not change and branches out from its real root, that is, it is incumbent to protect the human society from annihilation and demolition.

This is what they aimed at in their action; they took it in reality and rejected it in words. However, they did not stop at the lawful type, and crossed the boundary into unlawful one. That is, they adopted enslavement through domination and control. Thus they continue to enslave thousands, nay, millions, before the talk of abolition and after it. They still sell and purchase, give in gift and lend; but they do not name it enslavement, they call it colonialism or acquisition, protection or guardianship, consideration or help; or similar other words whose only purpose is to put a veil on the meaning of enslavement; and whenever a veil becomes worn out or torn, it is discarded and another is put in its place.

Now, nothing remains from what had been abolished by the Brussels Convention—which is continuously announced to the world and its people, and of which the civilized nations are so proud—those who are the pioneers of the developed civilization and in whose hand is the banner of human freedom—except the enslavement through the sale of sons and daughters and castration. And there is not any important benefit, which returns to the slaves; more over this much, is more of a personal aspect than

a sociological problem. As such, its abolition is merely a verbal argument, which serves as propaganda matter in their hands, like their all other arguments, which do not go beyond words, and do not affect any meaning.

Of course, there remains here another debatable issue and it is as follows. Islam begins in its war booties, from slave or other properties (other than the land conquered by force) with individuals from its society, and divides those booties amongst them; then it ends at the government, as was done in early days of Islam, and they reserve the right of their use for the government. But it is another topic apart from the original topic of enslavement; probably we shall be helped by God to fully discuss it later, God willing, under the verses of *zakāt* and *khums*; and the help is sought from God.

After all this, we return to the words of the author of *Mu'jamu al-a'lām* copied earlier: "The basis of abolition of slavery is equality of men in rights and duties." What is the meaning of: 'equality of men in rights and duties'?

Does it mean that they equally have rights whose consideration is necessary, even if those right are different and not equal, like the difference between the president and the subordinate, the ruler and the ruled, the commander and the subaltern, a law abiding citizen and the law-breaker, the just and the unjust, because they differ in their sociological weight?

If yes, then it is correct. But it does not mean that there is equality between a beneficial part of the society and the one who is unable to attach to the society and has no honor; he is rather like a lethal poison wherever it reaches destroys the life; it is the clear natural order that there should be difference between the two, and full freedom should be accorded to the former while the latter should be deprived of it; an enemy has no right on his enemy in his enmity, the wolf has no right over his victim, nor the lion over his prey.

Or, does it mean that because humanity is shared by all human individuals, and any individual, whoever he may be, has power to rise above in civilization, and receive happiness as others have done; so it is a right of humanity on the developing society that it should give freedom to every human being and to train and bring him up until it joins the good society?

This too is right. But sometimes training demands that the trainer should take away from the trainee the freedom of will and action for

sometime until he is fully trained, and acquires expertise and the use of his will; then he will truly enjoy the bliss of his freedom; just as a sick person is treated and given unpalatable medicines for his cure; and as a child is trained in a manner which he dislikes. Exactly in the same way Islam takes away the freedom of will and action from the unbelieving people who fight against Islam; it brings them inside the religious society, trains them and gradually brings them in the arena of freedom. The preceding statement shows that it is a sociological progress; we should look at it and its result and effect in a general and comprehensive manner; it is not an individual's matter, which may be seen individually and partially. Again, it is astonishing that they too affect an action which is followed in Islam, although they differ from it in name and the good intention, as explained earlier.

Or, does it mean that it is the right of the human freedom that it should be applied to all men, and every man should be left free to implement his unrestricted will?

But, it is clear without any doubt that it is not acceptable, nor is it feasible to do in its generality, especially about a fighting enemy—and it is the only aspect, which Islam considers for taking away the general freedom.

Apart from that, if it was true then there should be no difference between one or two and a group: Then why do they accord legal freedom to one (even in suicide) and two (in duel), yet they do not accept the right for a poor group from the humans that they should remain aloof in caves or such shelters and remain concerned with their own selves, eating the sustenance of their Lord and proceeding on the paths of their lives.

Now, remains one thing: Some one may say: Why did not Islam allow the slaves to own property, so that he could use it on necessities of his life without being a burden on his master? And why did it not put a limit on slavery by Islam, in order that the slave would become automatically free if he accepted Islam? This would remove from him the stigma of depravity, which stained him and his offspring, up to the Day of Resurrection.

But it should be realized that the order for establishment of slavery and depravity from owning a property, appears and is enforced, according to the Islamic *sharīʿah*, at the first moment of his capture; and the natural order against them, the fighting enemies, allowing their depravity of freedom aims at negating their plans and taking away their power of fighting (with which they could destroy the good religious society); and there is no

strength or power except through ownership; so when they would not own any work or its result, they would not get power for disputation or fighting. Of course, Islam has allowed them ownership in general by their masters' bestowing ownership on them; and it is an ownership under an ownership, and it does not carry the risk of the slaves' independent manipulation.

As for the suggestion that slaves should have become automatically free if they accepted Islam, it is a proposal that would negate the religious policy regarding the defence of Islamic territory, establishment of religious society on its feet, and religiously training these fighting groups (who have come under Muslims' control). Otherwise, they would have pretended to enter into Islam soon at coming under its authority, and just on being enslaved; in this way they would have preserved their power and armaments and then returned to their previous behavior.

We may go looking back at the custom prevalent among nations and groups from today to the earliest era in human history that we can get any information about. We shall see that when two nations or tribes fought and one of them vanquished and subjugated the other, then it considered it as its lawful right to go on killing the enemies until they totally submitted to its rule unconditionally.

This submission did not mean that the defeated party should put its arms on the earth, and then they would be left free to do, as they liked. Nay, they must accept the control of the victorious group, and must totally submit to what they decide about them and how they manage their persons and properties.

It would be foolish to restrict this control with a condition which would destroy the effect of this open submission; and which would negate its order, pave the way for the enemy to return to his planning and deception and give him a chance to hope to return to the original point. How can the victorious group tolerate this, while it had sacrificed the souls and properties for the independence of the blessed society? Will it be anything except injustice to its own self and insult to the most precious item, which it has, and wastage of the blood, properties and endeavours?

No one can raise objection against the victors (who sacrificed their lives and properties to overcome their enemies and thus reduced them to slavery) and say: Well, their men had fought and killed and perverted, so they were arrested and deprived of their freedom; but what is the fault of the

children who were born after it, who had not taken arms, drawn a sword, or entered into battlefield? But it is because they are their fathers' sacrifice.

After all this, it should not be forgotten that the Islamic government has the right to seek ways to emancipate the slaves through purchase or freeing, etc. when it finds that it is in the interest of Islamic society. And God knows better.

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A Talk on Punishment And Forgiveness

1. What is the Meaning of Requital?

No society is devoid of sociological responsibilities, which its members are required to respect. The only aim of the society is to maintain conformance between the members' activities, bring them nearer to one another and join one side of it to the other, in order that it all unites and combines and with its effects and results fulfils the members' needs to the extent everyone is entitled to according to his deeds and endeavours.

These responsibilities, inasmuch as they are related to voluntary affairs, a man may undertake them or leave them; and this in itself would not happen without some negation of the man's freedom of his will and action; it is not impossible for him to stay away from it wholly or partially because man by his nature inclines to freedom without restriction.

Attention to this defect in the laws, and this weakness in its structure, called the sociological man forth to complete this defect and strengthen its weakness by another means: That he should join its disobedience or neglect with some things which an adult and sane man dislikes. This exhorts him to obey the imposed law lest he is faced by consequences, which he dislikes and is hurt with.

This is the requital of the evil; and it is the right of the society or of the ruler against the disobedient ones. Parallel to it run the aspects of obedience. It is possible to keep for the obedient one something which he prefers and like as a recompense of his fulfilment of responsibilities, in order that it would induce him to perform an incumbent, or likeable deed; and it, in its turn, is the right of the obedient and submissive member of the society or the ruler; and it is the requital of the good deeds. Often the recompense of the evil is called punishment, and that of good is named reward.

On this very mode, the laws of Islamic *sharīʿah* are laid down. God says: *For those who do good is good* (reward) ... (10:26); *And* (as for) *those*

who have earned evil, the punishment of an evil is the like of it, ... (10:27); *And the recompense of evil is punishment like it, ...* (42:40).

Punishment and reward run to a broad spectrum, beginning from dislike and like, censure and praise, reaching to the ultimate point of good and evil. They are related to various factors: specialities of the deeds and the doers, the controller of affairs, and the extent of the benefit or harm that would accrue to the society. Probably, all this may be summarized in this way that the more consideration is given to an affair, the greater the punishment or reward for disobedience or obedience, respectively.

Between a deed and its recompense, a sort of similarity and resemblance is kept in mind, even if approximately. And the speech of God runs on the same pattern. God says: *... that He may reward those who do evil according to what they do, and* (that) *He may reward those who do good with goodness* (53:31). Even more clear are the divine words quoting the scriptures of Abraham and Moses (peace be upon both): *And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for; and that his striving shall soon be seen; then shall he be rewarded for it with the fullest reward* (53:39–41). And it is even more manifest in the laws of retribution. God says: *... retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain: the free for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female; ...* (2:178); *The sacred month for the sacred month and all sacred things are* (under the law of) *retaliation; so whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict injury on him according to the injury he has inflicted on you, and fear Allah* (2:194).

Consequently, it means that the punishment or reward returns to the doer's person with something similar to what he has done. For example, when he disobeys a sociological law, and enjoys himself with what inflicts harm to the society, then he will be deprived of equal amount of the enjoyments in his self, or body, or property, or prestige, etc. which somehow returns to him.

This is to which we pointed under discussion of the meaning of enslavement, that the society or the ruler owns from the culprit his person or some of his personal affairs, which is equal to the crime he has committed, or the defects of the harms, which he has inflicted on the society. Thus, he is punished, that is, the society, or the ruler, manipulates in relation to this ownership—that is, the right—in the life of the culprit or in some affair of his life, and takes away his freedom to that extent.

If he killed a person—when that person had not killed anyone nor had he done any mischief in the land—in the Islamic society, the ruler would own the person of the culprit because he had brought to the society loss of a respectful life; and its penalty, that is, killing, manipulates his life in exchange of the ownership he enjoyed. If he stole what amounts to a quarter dīnār from a secure place, he had brought harm to the society by tearing away a general peace and security's curtain laid down by the hand of *sharīʿah* and protected by the hand of trust. Its penalty is amputation[1] of the hand. What is the reality of this penalty? It means that the ruler has owned from the thief, in exchange of his felony, an affair of his life, which includes his hand and does in it what he decides by taking away his freedom and its means from this aspect. You may judge by analogy various punishments in different *sharīʿah*s and customs.

It is clear from above that the sociological crime and disobedience attract to themselves a sort of slavery and enslavement, for this reason a slave is the clearest example of punishment. God says: *If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy slaves;* (5:118).

This theme has different expositions in different customs and *sharīʿah*s. God mentions in the story of Joseph when he had put the drinking cup in the bag of his brother so that he could take him to himself: *They said: "But what shall be the requital of this, if you are liars?"* that is, in your denial of the theft of the king's drinking cup: *They said: "The requital of this is the person in whose bag it is found; thus do we punish the wrongdoers,"* that is, we punish the thief by enslaving him: *So he began with their sacks before the sack of his brother, then he brought it out from his brother's sack. Thus did We plan for the sake of Joseph ... They said: "O Chief! He has a father, a very old man, there-fore retain one of us in his stead; surely we see you to be of the doers of good."* This was the exchange and a sort of ransom: *He said: "Allah protect us that we should seize other than him with whom we found our property, for then most surely we would be unjust"* (12:74–79).

Often the killer was taken as a prisoner enslaved; sometimes he offered in ransom one of his women like his daughter or sister, etc. Ransoming through giving in marriage was prevalent up to these days among the tribes and clans in our areas, because they treat marriage as a sort of enslavement

1 In Shīʿah only four fingers are cut off. (Trans.)

for women.

2. Is An Obedient Person Counted as Slave of the Obeyed?

Based on this idea, sometimes an obedient one is counted as a slave of the obeyed one; because by this obedience his will follows the will of the obeyed one, thus he is his slave deprived of the freedom of will. God says: *Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! That you should not serve the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy, and that you should serve Me; ...* (36:60–61). *Have you then considered him who takes his low desire for his god, ...?* (45:23).

So, the society or ruler owns the guilty one who is punished. Conversely, the obedient one who is rewarded owns from the society or the ruler the reward that is equal to his obedience, because the society or the ruler has decreased through this responsibility some of the God gifted freedom of the obedient one.

What we have explained just now, is the secret of what is generally accepted that fulfilling the promise is incumbent, but not that of the threat. It is because the theme of promise in the arena of mastership and slavery is the reward for obedience, while the theme of threat is punishment for disobedience. The reward, inasmuch as it is the right of the obedient on the ruler and is his responsibility, its fulfilment is incumbent on him, so that he may discharge his responsibility; contrary to the punishment, because it is the right of the ruler over the guilty person, and it is not necessary that man must manage his property and get the benefit of his right—it is left to his option. This topic needs further elaboration.

3. Forgiveness and Pardon

We have reached in the preceding discussion to the conclusion that it is OK to leave the punishment of disobedience, contrary to the reward of obedience. It is a natural dictate to a certain extent, and is based on the fact that meting out the punishment is the right of the ruler over the disobedient one, and it is not always necessary that one should use his right without fail.

However, as it is not always necessary to use one's right of punishment, likewise, it is not allowed to neglect this right altogether. Otherwise the natural decision of establishing the right would become null and void; there will be no sense in establishing a thing, which will have no effect at any time. Moreover, negating the right of punishment altogether would demolish the laws, which are made to protect the structure of society; if

they are demolished the society would be demolished without doubt.

The decision—permissibility of pardoning a sin—is established to a certain extent; but it is an unclear proposition. If there is a reason supporting the pardon, pardoning will be allowed; otherwise retribution is compulsory to maintain the respect of the law, which would protect the society and man's bliss. To this reality point the words of Jesus: ... *and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise* (5:118).

There are found in the noble Qur'an two general causes of pardon which the divine wisdom endorses:

One: Repentance of the servant to God, the Glorified—whether it is a return from disbelief to belief, or from disobedience to obedience, as was explained under "Repentance" in the volume four of the book.[1] God says: *Say:* "*O My servants! Who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord time after time and submit to Him before there comes to you the punishment, then you shall not be helped.* (This indicates the repentance from disbelief, to which applies the threat of punishment where no helper or intercessor can avail.) *And follow the best that has been revealed to you from your Lord before there comes to you the punishment all of a sudden while you do not even perceive*" (39:53–55).

(This indicates the repentance from disobedience to obedience, and here the benefit of intercession is not negated.)

God also says: *Repentance with Allah is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn* (to God) *soon, so these it is to whom Allah turns* (mercifully)*, and Allah is ever-Knowing, Wise. And repentance isnot for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: "Surely now I repent"; nor* (for) *those who die while they are unbelievers. These are they for whom We have prepared a painful chastisement.* (4:17–18)

Two: Intercession on the Day of Resurrection. God says: *And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know (him)* (43:86). There are many such verses, which deal with the topic of intercession; and we have

1 *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.8. (Trans.)

fully discussed this topic in the volume one of the book.[1] There are found in the noble Qur'an different occasions wherein forgiveness is mentioned without giving its cause, although by meditation, one may understand the general reason, which has been kept in sight, and it is the wellbeing of the religion. For example, see the divine words: *... and He has certainly pardoned you, and Allah is Gracious to the believers* (3:152); *Are you afraid to give in charity before your secret conversation? So when you did not do it and Allah has turned to you (mercifully), then keep up prayer and pay the zakāt and obey Allah and His Messenger; ...* (58:13); *Certainly, Allah has turned (mercifully) to the Prophet and the immigrants and the helpers who followed him in the hour of straitness after the hearts of a part of them were about to deviate, then He turned to them (mercifully); surely to them He is Compassionate, Merciful* (9:117); *And they thought that there would be no affliction, so they became blind and deaf, then Allah turned to them (mercifully), then many of them became blind and deaf ...* (5:71); *(As for) those who put away their wives by likening their backs to the backs of their mothers, they are not their mothers; their mothers are no others than those who gave them birth; and most surely they utter a hateful word and a falsehood; and most surely Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving* (58:2); *O you who believe! Do not kill game while you are in the robe of iḥrām, ... Allah has pardoned what is gone by; and whoever returns (to it) Allah will inflict retribution on him; and Allah is Mighty, Lord of Retribution* (5:95).

These are various occasions of the divine pardoning, and we have explained the particular speciality of each of them under each verse in the book, which may be consulted.

Of a totally different genre is the word of God: *Allah pardon you! Why did you give them leave ...?* (9:43). It is a *du'ā'*, like our saying: 'May God pardon you! Why did you do this and this?' Similar is the case of the verses 74:18–19, although in an opposite way: *Surely he reflected and guessed, but may he be cursed how he plotted.* Also of a different genre are the words: *Surely We have given to you a clear victory, that Allah may forgive you your past faults and those to follow* (48:1–2). It is understood from the fact that the forgiveness is taken to result from the conquest of Mecca, which God had bestowed on His Prophet, but there is no relationship between the

1 *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.1. (Trans.)

forgiveness of fault (that is, sin) and the conquest. It will be fully explained, God willing, under the exegesis of that verse.

4. Forgiveness has Grades

Forgiveness and pardon relates to sin; and sin generally attracts a sort of retribution and punishment. As you have seen, retribution has a very wide spectrum and covers various ranks; consequently pardon too has various ranks and grades. This difference does not appear in the sin itself, that is, in the evil consequence that follows the deed (because no one can deny such difference), and the requital, whether it is punishment or reward, is weighed in that scale.

We cannot avoid here the discussion about the sin and its various grades, and the meditation into what the natural reason leads to. Although the discussion is Qur'anic and its aim is to arrive at what the Divine Book leads to concerning these realities, yet as the Sublime God has declared in His speech, He speaks to us according to our understanding and the natural balance with which the things are weighed in the stages of theory and practice; and we have pointed to this fact in various topics of this book; and God has taken the support of human understanding and thought in various places, and has strengthened with it the aims of His speech; as He has variously said: 'then do not you understand', 'then do not you contemplate', and so on.

It is inferred from correct consideration that the first factor with which human society is attached and which it respects is the practical laws and esteemed customs by which the society preserves—through its implementation—the objects of humanity, and leads it to its felicity in life; then it lays down the laws by which the one who goes against it is punished, and the obedient one is rewarded.

At this stage the name, sin, is not used except for going back on the text of the practical laws, and inevitably it stands parallel to a number of sociological rules; and this meaning is settled in our—the Muslims'—minds, and so is the import of similar words like evil, fault, wrong, misdeed, error, outrage, transgression and so on.

Not only this practical laws, when they are acted upon, guarded and preserved, pull the society to suitable characteristics and attributes conforming with the societal aims which are the ultimate destination of human togetherness. It is these characteristics that the society calls human

nobilities and exhorts to it. Opposite to them are evil traits.

Although these factors differ one from another based on the difference in societies' customs and objects, yet the principle that they are the products of sociological laws cannot be ignored or refuted.

Although these good characteristics are spiritual attributes, and there is no guarantee to enforce it practically in the societies, and they are non-voluntary because they are traits; yet because their appearance follows repetition of enforcement of laid down rules in the society, or repeated neglect of those rules, the putting in practice those laws ensure their enforcement; and they are counted voluntary inasmuch as their preliminaries are voluntary, that is, repeated actions. Among its occasions may include rational commands related to noble characteristics like bravery, chastity and justice; and likewise prevents the evil traits like cowardice, rashness, degeneration, covetousness and injustice; in the same manner may be imagined for them rational punishment and reward like praise and censure.

In short, in this way takes place a stage of the sin above the preceding one, and it is the stage of negligence of creational laws and related rational commandments.

These rational commands are not counted as command except because of mutual attachment between them and the *wājib* actions, which lead to them. So, there is a judge, which establishes its incumbency and orders it, and that is the human intellect. Parallel to it the naming of rational prohibition as prohibition. And this is our way in all occasions of mutual attachment. So, whenever we enforce one side of the mutual attachments we at once order to enforce the other part and declare it as incumbent. And we consider neglecting it as disobedience to that rational command, and a sin that entails some sort of retribution.

This also makes clear another matter: As these virtues contain incumbent factors which one has to attach himself to—and likewise the evil traits contain forbidden items—and also cover recommended factors which serve as adornments and beauties in characteristics—and they are good manners with which are attached recommended rational commands. Yet when we look at it *vis-à-vis* ourselves, the attached manners (which are recommended in themselves) will inevitably become recommended rationally, following that interrelation. For example, the environment of a Bedouin to life (who lives a bedouinistic life) is removed from the average standard

of the civilized life; so he is not held responsible except for the elementary laws of society and general customs which his understanding power may grasp; sometimes he commits reprehensible deeds or utters ugly words, but a civilized man ignores it putting its blame on his misapprehension and his living far away from civil environment—where repeated observation of customs and manners is the best teacher for its residents.

Again an average civilian is not held responsible for those things for which people of exceptional qualities are deemed responsible—the people of fine understanding and lofty manners. When an average man does not observe fine manners and neglects attractive words and deeds, the only excuse offered on his behalf is that it is the limit of his understanding; he does not understand the concomitants of manner more than he performs, because of his environment.

And what he does (which he should not) is what the unique people are held responsible for. Often they are blamed for an undertone in speech, or a slight delay in movement, or missing an imperceptible moment in stillness, or turning or closing the eyes and so on—all this is counted as a fault or sin from them. But it is not a sin in the meaning of going against legislative articles, be it related to religion or to worldly affairs. It is well known that the good deeds of righteous people are the sins for the near ones.

The more the path becomes intricate and the position delicate, the more hidden sins become apparent which hitherto were unnoticed and the man had not perceived them, nor any ruler or controller was deemed responsible for them.

This, according to deep consideration, leads us to the commands, which develop in the framework of love and hate. An eye of hate—particularly in the condition of rage—sees all good deeds as condemnable sins. Conversely, a lover, when he wanders in love and is submerged in affection, deems slightest inattention towards his beloved a great sin, even if he performs all actions by limbs with all its pillars. It is only because he evaluates his deeds in the way of love according to his mind's attention and attraction of his heart towards his beloved. If it is discontinued because of heart's inattention then he has turned away from his beloved, cut himself from his remembrance, and thus negated the purity of his heart.

Until a time comes that he counts as crime and disobedience even engagement with necessities of life like eating, drinking, etc. He realizes

that although the said action is a necessity which man is compelled to do, yet each one of these compulsory actions in its root is voluntary; and engagement in it is engagement with other than the beloved and turning away from him by one's own will—and it is a sin. That is why we see that one who is overwhelmed with love and affection, and likewise a grieving and depressed person and others like these neglect food and drink, etc.

On this style should be explained what has been narrated from the Prophet: Surely desire covers my heart, so I seek pardon from God every day seventy times. And the same may be taken to mean in a way the divine words: *... and ask pardon for your fault and celebrate the praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning* (40:55). *Then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and ask His forgiveness; surely He is oft-returning* (to mercy), (110:3).

The same will be the bearing of what God has quoted from various noble prophets; like the words of Noah: "*My Lord! Forgive me and my parents and him who enters my house believing, ...*" (71:28); and the words of Abraham: "*O our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass!*" (14:41); and the words of Moses for himself and his brother: "*My Lord! Forgive me and my brother and cause us to enter into Thy mercy, ...*" (7:151); and what has been quoted from the Prophet: "*We hear and obey; our Lord! Thy forgiveness* (do we crave)*, and to Thee is the eventual course*" (2:285).

So, the prophets (peace be upon them!), inasmuch as they were infallible, could not have committed any disobedience, nor could they perpetrate any sin in the meaning of contradicting any article of religion which they were sent to invite to, and which they were engaged in conveying by words and deeds; as their obedience was obligated from God, and there was no sense in obligating the obedience of one who was not assured of abstaining from disobedience, Sublime is God from it.

The same will be the bearing of the confession of injustice and so on, as quoted from some of them (peace be upon them), like the words of Dha al-Nūn (Companion of the Whale): "*There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee; surely I was of the unjust ones!*" (21:87); because as it is possible that they should count some lawful deeds done by them as sin for themselves and should ask forgiveness from God, likewise it is possible to count it as their injustice, because every sin is injustice.

It had been said earlier that there might be another explanation: That

injustice might indicate injustice against one's soul, as was seen in the words of Adam and his wife: "*Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers.*" (7:23).

Beware! You should not think that when we say for a verse: It has this or that bearing, we admit that it is against its apparent meaning and then we strive to invent a meaning which could be applied to it; in other words, the Qur'anic verses should be reinterpreted with the aim of protecting the sectarian views. A free discussion was given in the volume two of this book[1] on the subject of the prophets' sinlessness, without relying on strange and extraneous premises.

We have explained there that the apparent speech is not restricted in its identification on common understanding confined to the sentence concerned; rather it also seeks help from associations of context and wordings, joined to it and separate from it, like a verse which throws light on another verse. These associations have definite effects on apparent meanings, especially in the divine speech, one part of which interprets another, some portions of which testify for and affirm the other portions.

Inattention to this point has given rise among many exegetes and theologians to the idea of reinterpretation, in the meaning of turning the speech away from its apparent import, and striving to do so in the verses, which go against their particular belief. You see, they cut up the Qur'an into fragments, and then hold each piece to mean what a vulgar plebian understands from the talk of another vulgar person like himself. Thus, when they hear God saying (about Jonah): *so he thought that We would not straiten him,* (21:87), they take it to mean that, God forbid, he thought or believed that God was unable to catch him; in spite of the fact that the next verse: ... *and thus do We deliver the believers* (21:88); counts him among the believers, and he who entertains slightest doubt about God's power is devoid of faith and belief, let alone the one who gives more weight to God's (supposed) feebleness or believes Him to have no power.

And when they hear Him saying: ... *that Allah may forgive you your past faults and those to follow* ... (48:2)[2], they think that the Prophet had

1 a*l-Mīzān* (Eng), vol.3. (Trans.)

2 This based on the literal translation of the verse. (Ed.)

committed a sin and God forgave it, just as one of us commits sin by going against a divine order or prohibition given by masterly authority, from which springs a law of *fiqh*.

They were not led by meditation even to the extent of looking at the preceding verse: *Surely We have given you a clear victory* (48:1); otherwise it would have been clear to them that if this fault and the related forgiveness were like the sins committed by us, and the subsequent forgiveness, there was no reason to attach the forgiveness to the conquest of Mecca (as an objective is attached to its controller). Also, there was no reason to join with conjunction what follows, that is, the words: ... *and complete His favor to you and keep you on a right way, and that Allah might help you with a mighty help.* (48:2–3)

Likewise, when they hear all those verses which, according to their view, contain the "slips" of the prophets, like those in the stories of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Joseph, David, Solomon, Job and Muḥammad (blessings of God be upon him and his progeny and these prophets), they hasten to attack their esteemed status, and they do not refrain from speaking in an ill-manner about them, although they themselves deserve those insulting remarks; what defect surpasses ill manners?

Their wrong thinking and rotten outlook misled them until they exchanged their Lord, the Lord of the universe, with the Lord, which is, portrayed in the corrupted Old and New Testaments. They think that the Lord is an unseen power who has a solid body, and who turns around the mill of existence, as an arrogant person manages his kingdom, who has no aim except to satiate his desire and anger. First, they were ignorant of the status of their Lord, and then they forgot the position of the prophets effacing their noble and spiritual high grades, and actual sublime positions. This made those purified sacrosanct souls resemble the rotten contemptible souls whose only share in human nobility is its name; it destroys soul of this,[1] deceives honor of that, and looks covetously at property of that other. And with all their ignorance, they are not ready to accept that a person who manages any of their worldly affairs, or the one who is given responsibility to look after their home and family, should be afflicted by such scandals. Then how do they agree to ascribe such disgraceful things

1 Refer to what they have narrated about David, Solomon, Abraham, Lot and others, peace be upon them. (Auth.)

to God, the Glorified? And He is the Knowing, the Wise, Who sent His messengers to His servants, so that they should not have any proof after their advent. Would that I knew, what proof would be established against an unbeliever or a transgressor if it were possible for a messenger to disbelieve or transgress or invite to polytheism and idolatry, then he washes his hand of it and ascribes it to the Satan.

And when they are reminded of the divine protection enjoyed by divine prophets (peace be upon them) and shown their God gifted positions and spiritual status, they count it as polytheism, and inordination regarding the servants of God, and start repeating the verse: *Say:* "*I am but a mortal like you!*"

They, to a certain extent, are right in refuting it; because what they think about the Lord, and what attributes they ascribe to Him, is much lower than what they mention of the positions of the prophets (peace be upon them) and much below their status and honor. It is all an example of the afflictions, which Islam and Muslims had to suffer because of what the People of the Book, and especially the Jews, have inserted, in Muslim traditions. Thus they turned the hand mill of Islam around an strange pivot, and they believed about the Glorified God (like Whom there is nothing) that He is like an arrogant man who thinks that he is totally free, he is not asked about his actions while the others have to answer about their activities. According to them, when effects follow their causes, when results appear after premises, and when the existing particulars (in the form or substance) demand appearance of their effects, it all happens at random, without any real connection. And when God ended the prophethood on Muḥammad and revealed the Qur'an to him, then He reserved Moses for talking and Jesus for support through the Spirit, it all was not because of any particular speciality in their noble souls, but just because He wanted to bestow on them this and that. And when Moses hit his staff on a rock and there appeared water streams in it, it was exactly as one of us hits his staff on a rock, but the difference is that God made that to flow and does not make this to do so. And when Jesus said to the dead bodies: "Stand up by the permission of God," it was just as if we might announce in graveyard: "Stand up by the permission of God," but God gave them new life and does not give life to these. And so on.

It is not but an analogy of the creative system with the legislative

system; but the latter has no natural structure except that people make it, give it a terminological name and preserve it, so it does not go beyond the area of society and does not cross the world of the societal man.

If they had used a little intelligence and meditated on the verses dealing with the affairs of fault and forgiveness (in its terminological meaning, that is, going against the master's command and prohibition) they would have realized that there is a forgiveness that is above the well known forgiveness.

Thus, God, the Glorified, repeatedly says in His speech that there are some of His servants whom He calls 'sincere' ones (or 'purified' ones) who are protected from sin (in its usual meaning). So they do not have any sin in their account, and consequently they do not need forgiveness related to that sin. He has clearly said about several of His prophets, like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses that they were purified, sincere. For example, He says about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: *Surely We purified them by a pure quality, the keeping in mind of the* (*final*) *abode* (38:46); and about Joseph: ... *surely he was one of Our sincere servants.* (12:24); and about Moses: ... *surely he was one purified, ...* (19:51). And God has quoted their asking for forgiveness, as the words of Abraham: "*Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents ...*" (14:41); and the words of Moses: "*My Lord! Forgive me and my brother and cause us to enter into Thy mercy, ...*" (7:151). If forgiveness were not ascribable except to sin (in the common meaning), this invocation would not be understandable.

Of course, one may say: They (peace be upon them) count themselves as sinners in humility before God, although they had not sinned. But such a man should realize that they (peace be upon them) were not wrong in this view of theirs and there was no recklessness in their talk, because forgiveness covers them in a correct meaning and this is a serious matter.

Moreover, see that Abraham offers his *du'ā'* for forgiveness for all the believers: "*O our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass!*" (14:41), which includes the sincere ones. Likewise, Noah prays: "*My Lord! Forgive me and my parents and him who enters my house believing, ...*" (71:28), and it by its generality includes the sincere ones. And there is no meaning in asking forgiveness for him who has not committed any sin, which would need forgiveness.

All this makes us realize that some sins with which forgiveness is attached are other than the sin (in its common meaning), and also some

forgiveness is other than the forgiveness of common meaning. God has quoted Abraham as saying: "*And Who, I hope, will forgive me my mistakes on the Day of Judgement.*" (26:82). Probably, that is the reason that we find in the divine speech that when God mentions mercy or the mercy of the next world which is the Garden, He mentions forgiveness before it. Like the Divine Words: *And say:* "*O my Lord! Forgive and have mercy, ...*" (23:118); "*... and forgive us and have mercy on us;* " (2:286); and He quotes Adam and his wife: " *and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, ...*" (7:23); and quotes Noah: "*and if Thou shouldst not forgive me and have mercy on me,*" (11:47).

The above statement proves that sin has different grades one above another and likewise forgiveness has grades parallel to the sin; each grade of forgiveness is attached to its parallel grade of the sin. Also, it is clear that it is not necessary that every sin and fault should be attached to a masterly command or prohibition, which average, man's mind would recognize; nor that every forgiveness should be attached to this type of sin.

Thus, the preceding discussion makes it clear that sin and forgiveness have four grades:

First: The sin related to masterly command and prohibition, that is, going against a rule of *sharīʿah* whether connected with its root or branch. You may also say: 'going against a legal article, whether religious or non-religious'. And forgiveness is attached to it, which stands parallel to it in rank.

Second: The sin, which is related to a creative rational command, and the forgiveness attached to it.

Third: The sin related to a mannered command (done by the one whose way of life is way of mannerism), and the forgiveness attached to it. Probably the above-mentioned two grades are not counted by common understanding among the sins and the forgiveness; an average man might treat that as a metaphorical use. But it has no relation with metaphor at all, because you have seen that real effects take place on them.

Fourth: The sin, which is pointed at by the taste of love, and the forgiveness attached to it. And the opposite is the case with hate in all grades. Average men do not count it as a grade of love; but they have erred in it; not intentionally, but because their rationality does not reach to the level of its understanding, and they do not clearly grasp its meaning.

Some one might say: It is merely the lovers' delusion or poetic

imagination, which is not based on any rational reality. But they do not realize that these imaginations, although they are delusions and notions in the path of sociological life, they exactly turn into realities—and what realities—in the path of servitude, emanating from the divine love which melts the heart and distracts the reason; and it does not leave any perception to the man to perceive any other than his Lord, nor any will to wish except what He wishes.

At this stage, he realizes that even a slight attention to his self or to his desires is a great sin and a thick curtain, which cannot be raised except by the divine forgiveness. God has counted sin as a curtain for the heart, which prevents man from total attention to his Lord, as He has said: *Nay! Rather, what they used to do has become like rust upon their hearts. Nay! Most surely they shall on that day be debarred from their Lord* (83:14–15).

This is what is understood by the serious discussion in which one does not play with the realities. Possibly, there may appear, to the friends of God who in their servitude proceed on the way of His love, fine points of sin and subtle aspects of forgiveness, which cannot be reached through general discussions.

5. Does Censure or Forgiveness Necessarily Mean a Preceding Sin?

If one observes the practice of society's sane persons, he finds that their censure or punishment is based on voluntary responsibilities; and one of the conditions of its correctness is rationality; and there are other conditions about whose identity, quiddity and limits various societies differ among themselves, and we are not concerned here with their details.

Our concern here is only with the understanding that differentiates between beauty and ugliness, beneficial and harmful, good and evil, according to the average condition of the people in their society. The people, with their sociological outlook, think that there is an active starting point in man which has this quality; although academic discussion sometimes makes it clear that it is not one of the natural powers consigned in man, like imagination and memory; rather it is but a trait which is acquired through conformance of several powers in action, like justice.

The societies, with all their differences, think that responsibility depends on this factor, which is called understanding; and reward and punishment branch out from it, as the responsibility springs from it; so

a sane person is rewarded for his obedience and punished for his crime.

However, others who lack this understanding, for example, a child, a mad person, an idiot and other weakened people, they do not deserve any reward or punishment—in their true sense—on what they do of obedience or disobedience. Yet sometimes they are awarded rewards for their acts of obedience to awaken their longing, or are held responsible and given disciplinary punishment *vis-à-vis* their disobedience. And it is commonly found in all societies, including the Muslim society.

Actually the above group, seen in the background of the felicity and infelicity, which are earned through obedience and obedience of the laid down responsibilities in this worldly life, are neither felicitous nor infelicitous, because no responsibility has been loaded on them; thus they have no reward (so they should be called felicitous) nor any punishment (so they should be called infelicitous), although sometimes they are exhorted by good reward or disciplined by evil result.

As for the life of the next world, which the divine religion affirms and then divides the people into two groups (without their being any third): felicitous and infelicitous, or rewarded and punished. What the Qur'an describes about it is a vague statement whose details are not explained, because there is no rational way of identifying their detailed condition after leaving this world. God says: *And others are made to await Allah's command, whether He chastise them or whether He turn to them* (mercifully)*; and Allah is Knowing, Wise* (9:106). Also, He says: *Surely* (as for) *those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls, they shall say: "In what state were you?" They shall say: "We were weak in the earth." They shall say: "Was not Allah's earth spacious, so that you should have emigrated therein?" So these it is whose abode is hell, and it is an evil resort; except the weak ones from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way* (to escape)*; so these, it may be, Allah will pardon them, and Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving* (4:97–99).

These verses—as you see—contain the news of pardoning them and returning to them (mercifully) and there is no forgiveness where there is no sin, and it talks about their punishment, and there is no punishment on him who is not given any responsibility. However, you have known that sin, and likewise forgiveness as well as reward and punishment, have many

grades: some of them are related to violation of masterly or rational responsibility; while others are related to rotten psychological forms and filth of heart which prevent man from his Lord. And these people, although they are apart from attachment of responsibility (which depends on reason), yet they are not protected from impurities of the souls and curtains of the hearts, which need enjoying the bliss of divine nearness and presence in the arena of sanctity in order to remove that dirt, and for forgiving it, covering it and pardoning it.

Probably, this is the meaning of what has been narrated in some traditions: "Surely God will gather them, then He will create a fire and order them to enter it; so whoever enters it enters the Garden, and whoever refuses to enter it, enters the Fire." We shall speak about these traditions in the exegesis of the chapter of "Repentance," God willing; and some details were given in the chapter of "Women."

Of the use of pardon and forgiveness on occasions other than sin in the divine speech is what has repeatedly come on the occasion of abolishing an order, as God says: ... *but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful* (5:3). A similar verse is in the chapter six, "Cattle." Also, God says while abolishing *wuḍū'* when water is not available: and if you are sick, or on a journey: ... *betake yourselves to pure earth, then wipe your faces and your hands; surely Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving* (4:43). Also, He says in connection with the mischief makers in the earth: *Except those who repent before you have them in your power; so know that Allah is Forgiving, Merciful* (5:34). Likewise, He says relating to the abolition of the order of *jihād* from excused persons: ... *there is no way* (to blame) *against the doers of good; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful* (9:91). There are many other such verses.

And God says regarding travails and afflictions falling the people: *And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and* (*yet*) *He pardons most* (*of your faults*) (42:30).

It is now clear that the attribute of pardoning and forgiving belong to Him, the Sublime, like the attributes of mercy and guidance, which are related to the affairs of creation and legislation both. Thus, God, the Sublime, pardons sins and disobediences and erases them from the scroll of deeds; and He pardons the order, which reason demands its enforcement and erases it by not legislating it. And He pardons travails and afflictions,

whose causes are existent; and erases them so that they do not afflict the man.

6. Relationship Between Action and Recompense

We have understood from the preceding discussion that the orders and prohibitions, that is, the rules and laws prevalent among the sane persons give rise to fine beautiful effects on its implementation—which is called reward; and evil effects on its disobedience—which is called punishment. And that it is like a device which they use for its implementation; so their arrangement to make good recompense for obedience, is only for encouragement to the one who implements, and the evil recompense on disobedience is only to put the defaulter in fear and make him cautious against transgression.

It appears from it that the relationship between deed and recompense is a relationship made and laid down by the society or the ruler; called them to it their pressing need to the action, in order that they get its benefit and fulfil with it their need. That is why you see them that when they do not have its need and their requirement of it is fulfilled, they become careless in fulfilling the promised or threatened reward or punishment.

And that is the reason that you see that the recompense differs in magnitude and paucity, and emolument changes in power and feebleness, depending on the difference of need to that action. The more the need to it the more the wages, and the less the need the less the wages. Thus, the instructor and the instructed, and the commander and the commanded are like the seller and the buyer both of them give something and take something.

The wage and reward is like the price; and punishment is like the fine imposed on the one who ruins something and is held responsible for its price, which he has to pay.

In essence, this concept is established and regarded similarly to other sociological constructs that drive the workings of human society. These include hierarchies of leadership and subordination, systems of command and prohibition, dynamics of obedience and defiance, notions of duty and prohibition, concepts of ownership and property, as well as transactions like buying and selling. In contrast, realities refer to tangible entities and conditions that exist independently of human perception. These realities remain constant regardless of wealth or poverty, honor or disgrace, praise or criticism. Examples include the earth and its produce, the inevitabilities

of life and death, states of health and illness, experiences of hunger and satisfaction, thirst and its quenching.

This is typical of how rational people in society behave. In His teachings, God addresses us in a manner akin to how one person interacts with another. He has shaped the concept of bliss, to which He guides us through His religion, in a form resembling societal norms and customs. This includes issuing commands and prohibitions, providing encouragement and warnings, delivering good news and cautions, and outlining rewards and punishments. In this way, we assimilate religious teachings as effortlessly as we adopt sociological laws and customs. God says: ... *and were it not for Allah's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure,* ... (24:21).

Furthermore, God has not overlooked the aspect of nurturing the soul, which is capable of grasping deeper truths. He indicates in several verses of His Book that beyond the religious knowledge, which the apparent meanings of the Qur'an and Sunnah convey, there lies a greater dimension and a more profound, valuable secret. He states: *And this life of the world is nothing but a sport and a play; and as for the next abode, that most surely is the life,* ... (29:64).

Thus He has counted the life of the world a play, which has no basis except imagination, and whose only function is to prevent man from what is important for him, and it is the next abode and eternal felicity of man which is the reality of life. If the life of the world is exactly what we call life other than the life affairs which are attached to it of property, status, kingdom, honor, nobility and so on, then its being sport and play with what we see of the realities further necessitates the life affairs to be sport and play. And if it means the life of the world with all its attachment, then the matter is clearer.

So, these sociological customs and the objects which are sought with them as honor, status, property, etc.; then those factors and aims and objects (which are contained in religious education) to which God has guided us through nature, then through messengership, all these things are like a toy which a reasonable guardian, who brings up a child, puts before the small child (who does not know his good from his evil), then keeps playing it with him, in order to exercise his body and refresh his mind, so that he may prepare the child for practical purposes to make him succeed

in it. Thus, the sporting event is for the child a beautiful play, which leads him to action, and for the guardian it is a serious work full of wisdom, which has nothing to do with play.

God says: *And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport. We did not create them both but with the truth, but most of them do not know* (44:38–39).

Then God explains how this formal upbringing leads to its spiritual aims, in a general similitude which He has given to the people: *He sends down water from the cloud, then water-courses flow* (with water) *according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam, and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of making ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it; thus does God compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it tarries in the earth* ... (13:17).

The divine speech makes it clear that there is a real relationship between deed and recompense beyond the laid down and considered relationship which the social people see between them; and the divine teaching proceeds on the same line.

7. The Deed takes Relationship to the Soul

Then God explained that deed takes this relationship to the soul from the side of the psychological form, which it acquires through action and the condition, that it leads to. God says: *but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned, ...* (2:225); *and whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will call you to account according to it, ...* (2:284). And there are other verses of the same meaning.

It becomes clear from it that all the effects which emanate from deeds, whether reward or punishment, they in reality emanate from what the souls earn by the way of deeds; and that the actions have no function except mediation.

Then God made it clear that what will face them of the recompense of the deeds, it will be the deeds themselves as a matter of reality; it is not as man puts a deed in his society then follows it with recompense; rather the deed is preserved near God with preservation of the acting soul, then God will manifest it (deed) before it (soul) on the day when hidden things will be made manifest. God says: *On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil; it shall wish that*